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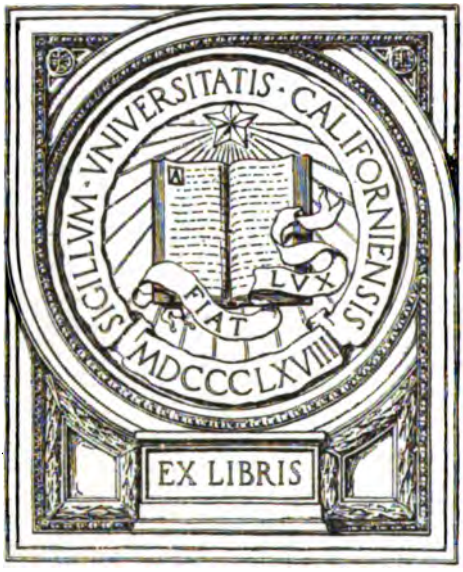

WRITINGS

OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

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WRITINGS

OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

EDITED BY

WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD

VOL. I

1779–1796

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NOTE

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, son of John and Abigail (Smith) Adams, was born in the North Parish of Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts, on July 11, 1767. He died in the city of Washington, February 23, 1848. More than fifty years of his life were passed in the public service and almost one-half of that service was in Europe, as diplomatic representative of the United States in Great Britain, Holland, Prussia, and Russia. He resided abroad in the period of the French Revolution and of Napoleon, and, as intelligencer to the Department of State, he described fully the events as they passed before his eyes, seeking the motives of the actors and the trend of public policy. At an early age, trained and encouraged by his parents, he kept an almost daily record of events, and continued it for more than sixty years, in itself an extraordinary labor to be performed by one who was so active a participant in the social movements of his day. He supplemented his official despatches with letters, quite as detailed but in a different vein, to family and friends. His correspondence, public and private, was his own, and at no time of his busy life did he employ a secretary, even for formal notes. His state papers, legislative and executive, were drafted and not infrequently fairly copied by his own hand. His spare moments were occupied in poetic composition, in translations from the classics, from the French, German, and Dutch, and in noting down speculations upon subjects immediately before him. He

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never had an idle moment, and the records of his manifold activities are full and conclusive.

The first publication from his pen was his "oration" delivered at Commencement, July 18, 1787, on his graduation from Harvard University. Through the agency of Rev. Jeremy Belknap, this appeared in the *Columbian Magazine* (Philadelphia), September, 1787. In June, 1791, began to appear in the *Columbian Centinel* of Boston, his letters of "Publicola," in which he replied to Paine's *Age of Reason*. Thereafter and throughout his life he engaged in many controversies, wrote much upon public questions, and delivered occasional addresses upon many subjects. A small part of this controversial matter was printed at the time, in newspapers, pamphlets, and volumes. A bibliography of his published writings, appended to these volumes, will afford some measure of their extent, variety, and general interest.

From this great mass of writings a selection only can be made for these volumes, with a purpose to include what is of permanent historical value, and what is essential to a comprehension of the man in all his private and public relations. Nothing is suppressed which can contribute to this purpose, and the text is printed as it was written. Where the material itself is so full and varied, elaborate annotation would be superfluous. The editor has restricted his notes to the identification of individuals and indication of related material. In 1874–1877 the *Memoirs* or Diary was published in twelve volumes, by his son, Charles Francis Adams, and is used in those volumes only when needed to explain the text. From the correspondence and state papers the larger part of this selection will be drawn, and so far as the correspondence is concerned, only a small part has heretofore appeared in print.

To Charles Francis Adams, Henry Adams, and Brooks Adams, grandsons of John Quincy Adams, I owe a debt which I can never pay. In his particular line and generally, each has been an influence and encouragement to high endeavor.

WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD.

Boston, November, 1912.

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WRITINGS

OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

WRITINGS OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

TO ARTHUR LEE[1]

ALLIANCE, MINDEN, May , 1779.

SIR,

I have received a volume entitled "Fondemens de la Jurisprudence naturelle, traduit du Latin, de Mr. Pestel, professeur en Droit public à Leyde," which you did me the honour to send me as a present. I entreat you, sir, to accept of my sincere thanks for the proof of your attention to me.

[1] From the original in the New York Public Library. In November, 1777, Congress determined to recall Silas Deane from France, and on the 28th chose John Adams to be his successor. He accepted the appointment, and on February 13, 1778, with his son John Quincy Adams, then a boy of ten years old, embarked on the frigate *Boston*, lying in the roadstead of Boston. The story of the voyage is told in the Diary of John Adams, printed in *Life and Works of John Adams*, III. 94; and the Ms. log-book of the captain, Samuel Tucker, is in the Adams Mss. As fellow-passengers were Jesse, son of Silas Deane, and a son of William Vernon, of the Continental Navy Board, both about the same age as John Quincy Adams; also two French officers returning to France and the French surgeon of the vessel, Nicholas Noël, of whom the young Adams received some lessons in French. They landed at Bordeaux, April 1, and arrived at Paris, April 8. Six days later the son was placed with Le Cœur, master of the academy or *pension* at Passy, and he went "much pleased with the prospect, because he understood that rewards were given to the best scholars, which, he said, was an encouragement. Dancing, fencing, music, and drawing are taught at this school, as well as French and Latin." Adams, *Works*, III. 132. Jesse Deane and Benjamin Franklin Bache, later the editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora*, were placed in the same pension. Nearly a year passed when the father resolved to return to America, and intended to sail in the frigate *Alliance*, from Nantes. The French government changed her destination, and after a delay of three months at Nantes and L'Orient, father and son embarked on the French frigate *Sensible*, having as fellow-passengers the new minister to the United States, M. de la Luzerne, and his secretary of legation, Barbé de Marbois. Sailing June 17, 1779, the ship arrived at Boston, August 2.

It was very good in you, to turn my young head to such a subject so important in itself, and likely to be particularly so to our Country. I will endeavour to make the best use of it I can, as soon as I shall be able to comprehend it.

Please to present my Respects to your Nephew, and believe me with great Veneration, yours etc.

TO JOHN ADAMS

LEYDEN, December 21st, 1780.[1]

HONOURED SIR,

Mr. Thaxter and brother Charles wrote both to you the day before yesterday, and as I had no subject to write

Under date June 20 the father wrote in his Diary: "The Chevalier de la Luzerne and M. Marbois are in raptures with my son. They get him to teach them the language. I found this morning the Ambassador seated on the cushion in our state-room, M. Marbois in his cot, at his left hand, and my son stretched out in his, at his right. The Ambassador reading out loud in Blackstone's Discourse at his entrance on his Professorship of the Common Law at the University, and my son correcting the pronunciation of every word and syllable and letter. The Ambassador said he was astonished at my son's knowledge; that he was a master of his own language, like a professor. M. Marbois said, your son teaches us more than you; he has *point de grace, point d'éloges*. He shows us no mercy, and makes us no compliments. We must have Mr. John." *Works*, III. 214.

On September 27, 1779, John Adams was chosen by Congress to be minister plenipotentiary for negotiating a treaty of peace and a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and Francis Dana to be his secretary. The French minister offered the *Sensible* for their passage, and on November 13 they went on board the vessel in Boston harbor, with John Quincy Adams, then twelve years, and his brother Charles, nine years old. They landed at Ferrol, Spain, December 8, and went by land to Paris, where the two boys were placed in Le Cœur's pension. John Adams, *Works*, III. 229. With this journey the Diary of John Quincy Adams really begins, for in the previous year his father had given him pencil and pencil-book, and told him to note the events which happened to him, the objects seen, and the persons conversed with from day to day. He also received a blank-book in which to preserve copies of all his letters. The record was not complete, and intervals occurred without notes or letters, with promises of greater industry and perseverance.

[1] Beginning with September, 1780, he and his brother Charles attended the Latin School at Amsterdam, whose history went back to 1342. He notes little of his

upon I did not write. But I can now give you an account of our journey.

We dined on Monday at Haerlem, and arrived at Leyden at six o'clock. We lodged at the Cour de Hollande and saw Mr. Waterhouse[1] that evening. The next day we went to hear a medicinal lecture by Professor *Horn*. We saw several experiments there. In the afternoon we went to hear a law lecture by Professor *Pestel*.[2] Each lecture lasts an hour.

Yesterday afternoon we moved from the Cour de Hollande to private lodgings in the same house in which Mr. Waterhouse boards. Our address is Mr. &c. by de Heer Welters, op de lange Burg, tegen over 6 Mantel Huis, Leyden.

I was to day in company with the parson of the brownist church, who seems to be a clever man. He is a scotch-man, but does not pray for the King of England.

I should be glad to have a pair of scates. They are of various prices, from 3 guilders to 3 ducats. Those of a ducat are as good as need to be, but I should like to know whether you would chuse to have me give so much.

studies in his "journal," save that he and his brother had a separate room for study, "because we do not understand the Dutch," and every Wednesday and Saturday they went to their father's lodging for the stated holidays. He was reading the *Spectator*, the *Tatler*, and the *Guardian*, from which he made extracts in his journal. John Adams notes in his Diary, January 11, 1781: "Was present from 12 to 1 o'clock, when the preceptor gave his lessons in Latin and Greek to my sons. His name is Wensing. He is apparently a great master of the two languages; besides which, he speaks French and Dutch very well; understands little English, but is desirous of learning it; he obliges his pupils to be industrious, and they both made great progress for the time; he is pleased with them, and they with him. John is transcribing a Greek Grammar, of his master's composition, and Charles, a Latin one; John is also transcribing a treatise on Roman antiquities, of his master's writing. The master gives his lessons in French." *Works of John Adams*, III. 269. In this month John was matriculated into the University of Leyden, "the most celebrated university in Europe." Here he remained until he went to St. Petersburg as secretary to Francis Dana, chosen in March, 1781, to be minister to Russia.

[1] Benjamin Waterhouse (1754–1846). [2] Friedrich Wilhelm Pestel (1724–1805).

Mr. Waterhouse says that for riding I must have a pair leather breeches and a pair of boots. I should be glad if you would answer me upon that as soon as you receive this for there is a vacancy [vacation] here which begins tomorrow, and in the vacancy is the best time to begin to learn how to ride.

In the vacancy there will be no lectures at all, but our Master will attend us all the while, as much as when there is no vacancy.

I continue writing in Homer, the Greek grammar and Greek testament every day. I am your most dutiful son.

TO JOHN ADAMS

St. Petersburg, August 21, 1781, O.S.

Honour'd Sir:

We arrived here on Monday the 16/27 inst't, having left Amsterdam the 7th of July (N.S.) and rode the greatest part of the way day and night. The distance is about 2400 English miles.

The first place of any consequence we stopp'd at was Berlin, the capital of the King of Prussia's Dominions; this is a very pretty town, much more so than Paris, or London, as Mr. Dana says; but it will be still more so if the present King's [1] plan is adopted by his successor, for wherever there is a row of low, small houses, he sends the owners out of them, pulls them down, and has large, elegant houses built in the same place, and then sends the owners in again. But notwithstanding this, he is not beloved in Berlin, and every body says publicly what he pleases against the King; but as long as they do not go further than words,

[1] Frederick II, the Great.

he don't take any notice of it, but says that as long as they give him all he asks they may say what they will.

But they have great reason to complain of him, for he certainly treats them like slaves. Among other things, if a farmer has two or more sons the eldest inherits all the land and all the others (when of age) are soldiers for life at a gros[chen] and a half, which is about two pence sterling per day, and they must with that find their own provisions; if a farmer has but one son he inherits his land. Whenever a vacation [vacancy] happens in any regiment, he chooses one of his subjects to fill the place, and this subject from that time becomes a soldier for life; everybody that is tall enough is subject to this law. In peace time the native troops are disbanded nine months in a year, and in all that time their pay ceases and they must get their living as they can.

There is nothing very remarkable in Dantzic, Königsberg, or Riga; in coming to this last we pass'd through Courland, a province which does, strictly speaking, belong to Poland. But Russia has much more influence there than Poland itself. In that Province all the Farmers are in the most abject slavery; they are bought and sold like so many beasts, and are sometimes even chang'd for dogs or horses. Their masters have even the right of life and death over them, and if they kill one of them they are only obliged to pay a trifling fine; they may buy themselves, but their masters in general take care not to let them grow rich enough for that; if anybody buys land there he must buy all the slaves that are upon it.

Narva is the last place which we stopped at before our arrival here. It is a small insignificant town, but will be always famous for the battle fought there. As to this place, I have not been here long enough to know much about it; but by what we have seen of it I think it to be still handsomer

than Berlin. The streets are large and the houses very well built, but it is not yet half finish'd, and will require another century to be rendered compleat.

Just before we got to Berlin, by the carelessness of a postilion, our carriage overset and broke, so that Mr. Dana was obliged to buy another there; but luckily no body was hurt by the fall.[1]

Nothing else extraordinary befell us on our journey.

I am your dutiful son.

[1] The story of Dana's mission is given in Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, I. 574, and his despatches to Congress are printed in the same compilation. The French ambassador at St. Petersburg, the Marquis de Verac, could not speak English, nor Dana French, and young Adams proved of service. Five years later Abigail Adams met Verac in London, and wrote to her son that "The Marquis de Verac inquired after you with great politeness: said you were interpreter for him and Mr. Dana when you were at St. Petersburg." *Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams*, September 27, 1786. Ms. In 1787 the usual allowance for a private secretary was given to Judge Dana and paid to Adams. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 262. Writing on February 5, 1782, John Adams said: "It is a mortification to me to find that you write better in a foreign language than in your mother tongue. Your letters discover a judgment beyond your age, but your style is not yet formed in French or English." Ms.

He read Voltaire on St. Petersburg, and did not find the description correct in every particular; and having left his Littleton's Latin-English Dictionary at the Hague, he desires it be sent to him, as "this is not a very good place for learning the Latin or Greek languages, as there is no academy or school here, and but very few private teachers, who demand at the rate of 90 pounds sterling a year for an hour and a half each day. Mr. Dana don't chuse to employ any at that extravagant price without your positive orders, but I hope I shall be able to go on alone." *To his father*, October 12/23, 1781. In reply to an expression of surprise from the father he wrote, "There is nobody here but Princes and Slaves, the Slaves cannot have their children instructed, and the nobility that chuse to have their's send them into foreign countries. There is not one school to be found in the whole city." *Ibid.*, January 1/12, 1782. Fortunately there was an English library to which Mr. Dana subscribed. Here Adams found Hume and Mrs. Macaulay, and he began to study the German language. As nothing could be accomplished by the mission, he wisely decided to return to Holland, and in October, 1782, a year before Dana left St. Petersburg, he set out on his long journey. Leaving the Russian capital October 30, he did not reach the Hague until April 21, 1783. His

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

HAGUE, July 23d, 1783.

HONOURED MAMMA:

It is indeed a long time since I have received any letters from my friends in America, and I must own I have been a little behind hand within these two years, in writing to them. However, I hope they will consider that I have been all that time almost at the world's end, or to make the best of it, in such an *out of the way* place, as made it very inconvenient for me to write. But, I should think myself deficient in my duty, if I should let pass the present opportunity, without giving you some account of my travels, since I left Mr. Dana.

I set off from Petersburg the 19/30 of last October, in

father was at that time at Paris, and Adams began to study Latin and Greek under C. W. F. Dumas, a man of letters, the editor of Vattel, and secret agent in Holland of the United States. On his journey he had made some inquiries on the prospect of commercial relations between the United States and Sweden and Denmark. The Swedes "are in general good friends to America, but seem to be a little afraid for their mines; however they are very well disposed for carrying on commerce with America, and there is a merchant here named Cederström, who has a brother lately settled in Boston. Mr. Eberstein the first merchant in Norrköping only waits for an opportunity to send some ships. Mr. Brandenburg, in Stockholm, intends to send a Vessel to some part of America this spring. He desired me to let him know what would be the best articles he could send, and gave me a list of the exports of Sweden, a copy of which I have sent to Mr. D[ana], desiring him to answer Mr. Brandenburg as I was not certain myself about the matter." *To his father*, Gothenburg, February 1, 1783. "As to this country [Denmark] I cannot tell what sort of trade we shall be able to carry on with it; however, there is already a person designed to be as the minister of this court in our country, and everybody here say they never doubted of the Independence of America; but things have greatly changed here within these three months." *To his father*, Copenhagen, February 20, 1783. Richard Soderström came to Boston, and was consul of Sweden; but difficulties arose in connection with commercial transactions of his brother Carl Soderström, of Gottenburg. *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1783–1789 (Sparks), III. 796.

company with Count Greco, an Italian gentleman, with whom I was acquainted, at that place; and on account of the badness of the roads and weather, and of our having a great number of considerable water passages, which had began to freeze over, did not arrive in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, until the 25th of November. The distance is about 800 English miles. I stayed at Stockholm about six weeks, and was much pleased with the polite manner in which the people of the country treat strangers. Sweden is the country in Europe which pleases me the most, that is, of those I have seen, because their manners resemble more those of my own country than any I have seen. The King is a man of great ability.[1] In the space of one day from being the most dependent, he rendered himself one of the most absolute monarchs of Europe. But he is extremely popular, and has persuaded his people that they are free, and that he has only restored them their ancient constitution. They think they are free, and are therefore happy. However, in the interior parts of the Kingdom, he has lost a little of his popularity, because he has laid some heavy taxes upon brandy and some other articles.

I left Stockholm the 31st of December and was obliged to stop at a small town, called Norrköping, at about 120 miles from Stockholm, for a fortnight, because of a very heavy fall of snow, which happened just at that time. I stopped also about three weeks at Gottenburg, and arrived at Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark (it is about 600 miles from Stockholm), the 15th of February, of the present

[1] Gustavus III reigned 1771–1791. Determining to free himself from the supremacy of the aristocracy which had so trammelled his predecessors, he gathered round him a number of young officers, and in August, 1772, defied the Diet and won his end. He obtained a power which he used for advancing the prosperity of the people, but the extravagance of his court necessitated burdensome taxation. He was assassinated by an agent of some of the nobles.

year. I found there Count Greco, who had taken a different road from Stockholm. He had taken a place in a vessel, which was to sail three days after my arrival, for Kiel, a town in Germany, near Hamburg. Not to lose the opportunity, I had a place in the same vessel, but after having waited three weeks for a good wind, the harbor froze up, and we were obliged, after all, to go to Hamburg by land. The people in Denmark treat strangers with a great deal of politeness and civility, but not with the same openheartedness, which they do in Sweden. The government is entirely monarchical. But it astonishes me that a whole people can place at the head of their government such a man as the King of Denmark,[1] because his father was a king. The hereditary prince, it seems, is, at least, possessed of common sense, and is regarded in the country as a prodigy, as he indeed is, if he is compared to his father.

I arrived at Hamburg (which is about 300 English miles from Copenhagen) on the 11th of March. I stayed there near a month. It is a large city, quite commercial, and will, I dare say, carry on hereafter a great deal of trade with America. But its commerce is somewhat restrained, because it is surrounded by the dominions of the King of Denmark, and of the Elector of Hanover.[2] The Danes have built a town, at about a quarter of a mile from Hamburg, which is become now its rival in commerce. The Hamburgers have named this place Al-to-na, which signifies, *much too near*, as, indeed, it is for their commercial interests.

The last city where I made my stay, before I arrived at Amsterdam, was *Bremen*, which is another commercial Re-

[1] Christian VII, son of Frederick V. Coming to the throne in 1766, he fell into such imbecility as to be incapable of ruling, and after 1784 the government was that of his son, the Crown Prince, as regent.

[2] George William Frederick, George III of Great Britain.

public, but the city is much smaller than Hamburg. It was anciently one of the Hanseatic league, and has been in a much more flourishing condition than it is at present. There are at Bremen some public cellars, which are famous. I drank there some Rhenish wine, about 160 years old. I stayed only four days at Bremen and arrived at Amsterdam the 15th, and at this place the 21st of April, and here I have been ever since. Hamburg is about 450 English miles from this place.

Last night, at about 11 o'clock, Pappa arrived here from Paris, all alone, only accompanied by a servant. He intends to return to Paris in about three weeks.[1] . . .

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

PARIS, September 10th, 1783.

HONOURED MAMMA:

As you have ordered me in a letter, which I have lately received, to give you my observations on the countries thro' which I have travelled, the following are some upon Russia; but, I must previously beg you will remember, that you say in your letter that you expect neither the precision of a Robertson, nor the elegance of a Voltaire; therefore, you must take them as they are.

The government of Russia is entirely despotical; the sovereign is absolute in all the extent of the word.[2] The persons, the estates, the fortunes of the nobility depend entirely upon his caprice. And the nobility have the same power over the people, that the sovereign has over them.

[1] The son accompanied the father to Paris, where he served as an additional secretary.

[2] At this time Catherine II, who had gained the throne by deposing her weak husband, Peter III.

The nation is wholly composed of nobles and serfs, or, in other words, of masters and slaves. The countryman is attached to the land in which he is born; if the land is sold, he is sold with it, and he is obliged to give to his landlord the portion of his time which he chooses to demand. It is commonly two days in the week, I think. Others make them pay a sort of tax, of two or three rubles a year. (N.B. that a ruble is four shillings sterling, or thereabouts.) This makes a large revenue for the landlords, if they have a great number of serfs, and there are some of the nobles who have an amazing quantity of them. Out of each five hundred they are obliged to furnish one to the Empress every year, and this forms her army. I have been assured from good authority, that there is one nobleman who furnishes 1300 men a year to the Empress. According to that the number of his slaves would be 650,000. Supposing each of these slaves pay him a ruble a year his revenue will be more than 100,000£ Sterling per annum.

This form of government is disadvantageous to the sovereign, to the nobles and to the people, For first, it exposes the sovereign every moment to revolution, of which there have been *already* four in the course of this century; vizt. when Anne, Dutchess of Courland, was set upon the throne,[1] which was the right of Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the first. This was done by some noblemen, who wanted to limit the prerogatives of the sovereign, and be more powerful themselves. And they thought they would find Anne more ready to agree to their stipulations than Elizabeth, because she had no right to the crown; but she soon overturned all their schemes. For as soon as she found herself well seated upon the throne, she rendered

[1] In 1730. She reigned just ten years, and was much under the influence of Germans, and especially of Biren, a Courlander.

herself absolute, by reinstating the ancient form of government, and banished all those who had made these restrictions. This was the second revolution. The third was when Elizabeth dethroned *Ivan*,[1] an infant of six months old, and had him shut up in a tower, where he lived twenty years, and was then murdered in it. And the 4th, when Peter the third was dethroned by the present Empress.[2] This, I think, is sufficient proof that the government is disadvantageous for the sovereign. *Secondly*, as the nobles all depend wholly upon the sovereign, they are always in danger of their estates being confiscated and themselves sent into Siberia. It is commonly the fate of the favorites. Menzicoff, the Dolgorouckis, Biren, Bestucheff, Osterman, L'Estocq, all these have been the sport of fortune, for some time the favorites of the Emperors, and then sent to Siberia into exile, there to live in misery. The history of Menzicoff is the most extraordinary, and he did not deserve the fate. He was born at Moscow. He was of low extraction, and used to carry about the streets, while a child, pies, and sing ballads. Peter the first saw him several times, and asked him several questions. His answers pleased him so much that he took him to the Palace, and, by degrees, he became the favorite of the Emperor, who gave him the title of Prince, and made him General of his Army, etc. At the battle of Pultowa, he saved the Empire, because a manœuvre of his was the means of the battle's being decided in favor of the Emperor. During the whole reign of Peter the 1st and that of Catherine, he was high in power, but, under that of Peter the 2d, he was stripped of all his dignities, his fortune, which was immense, was confiscated, and him-

[1] Ivan VI. The uprising, directed against the German adventurer and his following, occurred in 1741. Elizabeth Petrovna (daughter of Peter the Great) reigned until her death in December, 1761. [2] In 1762.

self sent into exile, where he died in misery. This is very nearly the history of all the others. An author, who has written upon Russia, (Mannstein's *Memoirs of Russia*) says he has seen lands change masters three or four times in the course of a year. This is certainly not advantageous for the nobility. And, thirdly, as to the people nobody, I believe, will assert that a people can be happy who are subjected to personal slavery. Some of these serfs are immensely rich, but they are not free, and, therefore, they are despised; besides they depend still upon the nobles, who make them contribute the more for their riches. A nobleman wants money. If he has any rich serfs, he sends and lets one of them know that he must have, at such a time, a thousand rubles (more or less, according to circumstances). This the serf has a right to refuse, but in that case his landlord orders him to go and work upon such a piece of ground, so he is obliged either to give the money, or to go and work. The richer they are, the more the nobles prize them. Thus a common man costs but 80 or 100 rubles, at most; but I have seen a man, who gave to his landlord, for his liberty, and that of his descendants, 450,000 rubles. This proves the esteem they have for liberty, even where one would think they should not know that such a thing exists.

As I am a little pressed for time, and as my letter has already run to a considerable length, I must, for the present subscribe myself,

Your most dutiful son.[1]

[1] As Mrs. Adams intended to join her husband in France, the son was sent to London to meet her. He sailed from Hellevoetsluys by the packet boat on May 15, and reached Harwich two days later, and London on the same day. On the 18th he wrote to his father: "Mr. Fox has at length carried the election for Westminster by a majority of 235 votes, and all the city was illuminated last evening. But Sir Cecil [Wray] hopes still to get the better by the verification of the votes.

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, June 6th, 1784.

HONOURED SIR:

. . . . . .

In the course of the debate[1] the principal persons who spoke were on one side, Mr. Fox, Lord North, Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Lee; on the other Mr. Pitt, Lord Mulgrave, Sir L. Kenyon, Mr. P. Arden and Mr. Wilberforce; and if I may be allowed to give my opinion, Mr. Pitt is upon the whole the best and most pleasing speaker of them all. He has much grace in speaking and has an admirable choice of words. He speaks very fluently, so distinctly that I did not lose a word of what he said, and he was not once embarrassed to express his ideas. Mr. Fox on the contrary speaks with such an amazing heat and rapidity that he often gets embarrassed and stammers some time before he can express himself. His ideas are all striking, but they flow upon him in such numbers that he cannot communicate them without difficulty. I should think he would carry all before him if he spoke to persons who were to be convinced by anything that was said. Lord North is very cool, but does not I think speak like either of the two before mentioned. Mr. Sheridan speaks extremely fast, and has a wonderful facility of expression, but is not so distinct as Mr. Pitt. There, Sir, in obedience to your command have I given you my opinion of the eloquence of several great

Parliament met this day for the first time." At the end of the month the expected vessel arrived, but brought only letters. "The Cincinnati seem to be very much disliked the other side the Atlantic, several States have shown their disapprobation of them and it is supposed the order will be entirely annihilated. The House of Representatives of our State have taken some resolutions upon the subject, which I think quite noble." *To his father*, June 1, 1784.

[1] On the Westminster election.

orators. If it is erroneous, my judgment is in fault, for I have followed in this matter the ideas of no one. The other day I met with Governor Pownall, who desired me to present his compliments to you. He wishes to know something about the business of the donation, but I told him I believed you had heard nothing of it. He is going to spend some time in the South of France. . . .[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, June 18th, 1784.

HONORED SIR:

. . . . . .

I was in the House of Commons the day before yesterday again, and heard the debates upon the subject of parliamentary reform. I was witness to something very extraordinary. I mean that Mr. Fox spoke with Mr. Pitt in support of the motion, and Mr. Dundas, with Lord North against it. I have never been so much pleased with the debates as that day. Alderman Sawbridge moved for a committee to inquire into the state of parliamentary representation, and after several of the secondary speakers had delivered briefly their opinions, Lord North made a masterly speech against the motion, and was about two hours and an half delivering it. But Mr. Pitt, in a speech of a little more than an hour's length, took Lord N[orth]'s arguments all to pieces and turned them all against them. He spoke in a most striking and pathetic manner of the unfortunate situation in which this country now is, and endeavored to

[1] "There is a young American here named Murray, from Maryland; he is studying law in the Temple, and intends making a tour through Holland this summer, perhaps he will go over at the same time I do." *To his father*, June 15, 1784. William Vans Murray succeeded Adams March 2, 1797, as minister to the Netherlands.

show that it was for the most part owing to the defects of the representation in Parliament. This speech confirmed me in my opinion that he is the best speaker in the house, and I really think that

> Take him for all in all
> I shall not look upon his like again.

Mr. Dundas spoke for about half an hour against parliamentary reform, at least for the present time. Mr. Fox then spoke near an hour and a half extremely well for the motion. He made use of a great number of very artful and specious arguments against Mr. Pitt, and seemed as if he found some consolation for his misfortunes in [tea]sing the minister, tho' he spoke on the same side of the question. But tho' I don't pretend to say Mr. Pitt surpasses him in argumentation, yet I think nobody will deny that he does in the delivery. Mr. Fox has a small impediment in his speech, and one would think his nose was stopped by a cold when he speaks, whereas Mr. P[itt] has the clearest voice and most distinct pronunciation of any person I ever remember to have heard. But they are both very great men, and it is a real misfortune for this country that those talents which were made to promote the honor and the power of the nation should be prostituted to views of interest and of ambition. Your dutiful son.[1]

[1] In July his mother and sister arrived in London, and he there joined them. The return to Paris and the life there are told in the *Journal and Correspondence of Miss [Abigail] Adams*, published in 1841 by her daughter Caroline Adams de Windt.

May 4, 1785, John Adams, then at Auteuil, received a commission, instructions, and letter of credence to the court of Great Britain. The son determined to return to the United States and complete his education there. He embarked at L'Orient in [the French packet *Captain Le Fournier*, May 21, 1785, and on Sunday, July 17, the packet cast anchor in New York harbor. Adams wrote to his sister that he "was obliged to remain on deck all night in order to translate the

TO JOHN ADAMS

NEW YORK, August 3d, 1785.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Church proposes to embark on board the British packet, which is to sail to-morrow. He has offered to take my letters, and I suppose he will be the bearer of dispatches from Congress. Our passage, though it was not a stormy one, was very tedious.[1] Of eight weeks that we were at sea, we had at least four of such calm weather as not to proceed more than eight or ten leagues a day. As we were coming up the river, we met the other packet, which was sailing for France. I had only time to write a line and inform you of my arrival. I hope she has by this time performed a large part of her voyage, and that three weeks hence you will receive my letter. I shall remain here some days longer than I expected when I left you. As it was too late when I arrived here for me to be at Boston before Commencement, I thought there was less necessity of my being in haste to go. The President[2] has been polite to me, even beyond what I could have expected; he has given me an apartment in his house, where I have been these ten days. Mr. Jay was so kind before I came here to make me the same offer.

The politicians here wait with great impatience to hear from you. Matters seem to be at a crisis. The British

pilot's orders. Form to yourself an idea how I was puzzled to translate English sea terms that I did not understand into French sea terms which I knew no better." On the French packet met in the harbor at midnight, about to return to Europe, was Mrs. Catharine Macaulay. "I fancy she leaves the country with a less exalted idea of our virtues, than she had when she came to it."

[1] He left Auteuil May 12.

[2] Richard Henry Lee, who was elected president of the Continental Congress, November 30, 1784, and served until Congress ended its session, November 4, 1785.

instead of delivering up the posts, have lately sent there a reinforcement of troops. I have heard from merchants here, that the fur trade from which we are thus precluded by an open breach of the Treaty of Peace, is worth annually 50,000 pounds sterling. This may be overrated, but the reluctance the British show to leave the posts is sufficient proof that it is an important object. It is supposed that your next letters will give information on the subject, and let us know what is to be depended upon.

The duties laid on imported goods by many of the States, and the prohibition of all English vessels in Massachusetts, are another subject of much conversation. Merchants, who often adopt the proverb, that charity begins at home, endeavor to demonstrate that the country will suffer very much by these regulations. They say that all foreign nations will be discouraged from bringing us any goods while they are encumbered with such heavy imposts, and if we go for them ourselves, they will sell them only for money, which we have not. Many of them are still very much afraid of Great Britain. They dread a war, and in case she be not able to carry one on, they tremble lest she should shut her ports upon us and stop our trade with her West India Islands. They own that those Islands cannot subsist without us, but they think we could not hold out if we had no market to carry our productions to, so long as they could without them. You will easily see that this is the reasoning of a merchant who fears present losses, and does not consider future advantages. Fortunately the spirit of the people is different, and I doubt not, in case Great Britain should persist in her present conduct, sufficient firmness will be shown on this side the water. The State of Massachusetts have already prohibited all British vessels to come in their ports. A frigate appeared

since the act was passed, but was not suffered to enter. The States have not given to Congress the power of regulating their trade, but it is almost universally considered here a necessary measure. The President of Congress is however much against it. He has written you by this opportunity, and perhaps he has given you his opinion upon the subject.

You doubtless know before this, that Mr. Bowdoin was elected governor of Massachusetts at the last election, in the place of Mr. Hancock, who was chosen Member of Congress for the next session. The parties showed some rancor and acrimony at the time, but since the election everything has subsided, and the present Governor is very popular. It is generally supposed here that Mr. Hancock will next year be seated in the chair of Congress. I don't know however whether he has accepted the appointment.[1]

Mr. Osgood, Mr. Walter Livingston, and Mr. Arthur Lee are the Commissioners of the Treasury. Mr. Lee was chosen a few days since, and has accepted.[2] The board could not be composed of persons more universally respected.

Mr. de Marbois,[3] it is said, will in a short time leave

[1] "Mr. Hancock, being too infirm to act as Governor of Massachusetts, is chosen as member of Congress for the next year, and will probably take his rest in the President's seat next November. This is escaping Scylla to fall into Charybdis." *To his sister*, July 17, 1785. Hancock was chosen President of the Continental Congress, November 23, 1785. [2] July 27, 1785.

[3] Barbé Marbois (1745–1837) had served in the French diplomatic service in Germany before he received, in 1779, the appointment of Secretary of the French legation in the United States. He married in this country, and in 1785 was transferred to the governorship of Santo Domingo, whence he returned to France in 1790. Banished to Guiana during the French Revolution, he was recalled in 1801, and as Minister of finance negotiated the sale of Louisiana to the United States. Marbois had made his first voyage to the United States in the same frigate with John Adams and his son, and four years later an intercepted despatch from Marbois to Vergennes had an important influence in the peace negotiations, because of its disclosure of the attitude of France towards the United States. *Works of*

America, and Mr. Otto, formerly a secretary to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, is to succeed him. I believe he will not regret this country, nor do I think he will be much regretted himself. The Chevalier is supposed to be much more friendly to the country, and is much more respected here. Many persons wonder why a Minister is not sent from the Court of France.

After reading this letter, you will perhaps think I had better be at my studies and give you an account of their progress than say so much upon politics. But while I am in this place I hear nothing but politics. When I get home I shall trouble my head very little about them. I propose leaving this next Monday the 8th inst., and shall certainly be in Boston by the 20th. I am your dutiful Son.[1]

John Adams, I. 669. His wife the younger Adams described as "a pretty little woman. She was a Quaker, but appears not to have retained any of the rigid tenets of that sect."

[1] Intending to enter Harvard in the Junior Sophister class, he learned that an acquaintance with certain authors whose writings he had not studied was essential, although he was otherwise as well prepared for admission as others of that class. His father describes the qualifications gained in European studies, in a letter to Benjamin Waterhouse, April 24, 1785, printed in *Works of John Adams*, IX. 530. The rules of the college could not be set aside, and at the end of September, 1785, he went to Haverhill. "The class had then gone through four books of Homer's *Iliad*, two of Xenophon's Cyropaedia, the Greek Testament; in Latin they had gone through the Odes and Satires of Horace and were in the Epistles; in English they had finished the study of Geography and that of Logic, and had entered upon Locke on the Understanding. It so happened that when I was examined, the only book which I was tried in that I had studied before I came to America was Horace. Immediately upon going to Mr. Shaw's I began upon the Greek Grammar, which I learnt through by heart. I then undertook the Greek Testament, in which I went before I came here as far as the Epistle to Titus. In this I was not so far as the class. I also finished Horace and the Andria of Terence. In Logic I was equal with the class, and in Locke about 70 pages behind them, Guthrie's Geography I had also finished. On the 13th of last month I was examined before the President, three professors and four tutors: three stanzas in the Carmen Seculare of Horace, six lines in the fourth book of the Iliad, a number

TO JOHN ADAMS

CAMBRIDGE, May 21st, 1786, Sunday.

DEAR SIR:

I am now much more at my disposal, with respect to my time, than I was at Haverhill, and can devote more of it to writing; though, it is said, this quarter, that is, the last

of questions in Logic and in Locke and several in Geography were given to me." He was also asked to turn two English sentences into Latin, and was soon after told by the President that he was admitted and might live in the college — the latter an unexpected advantage. His roommate was Henry Ware, who had graduated the previous year and was described as "one of the best moral and literary characters in his class."

Adams remarked upon two matters in the college which could be altered for the better. "There is not sufficient communication between the classes. They appear to form four distinct orders of beings, and seldom associate together. . . . Another is, that the tutors are so very young. They are often chosen among bachelors that have not been out of college more than two years, so that their acquirements are not such as an instructor at this university ought to be possessed of. Another disadvantage of their being chosen so young is that they were the fellow scholars of those they are placed over, and consequently do not command so much respect as they seem to demand. However, take it all in all, I am strongly confirmed in your opinion, that this university is upon a much better plan than any I have seen in Europe." *To his father*, April 2, 1786. Ms.

"I was obliged in the course of six months to go through the studies which are performed here in two years and nine months. So different had my studies been from those at this place, that I had not before last October looked into a book that I was examined in, except Horace. Had I arrived here three months earlier, it would have been easier to enter into the class which graduates next Commencement, than it has been to enter the one I am in. This would have advanced me one year, but there are a number of public exercises here that I should not have performed and which I think may be advantageous; such is speaking in the Chapel, before all the classes, which I shall have to do in my turn four or five times before we leave college. Such also are the forensic disputations, one of which we are to have to-morrow. A question is given out by the tutor in metaphysics, for the whole class to dispute upon. They alternately affirm or deny the question, and write, each, two or three pages for or against, which is read in the Chapel before the tutor, who finally gives his opinion concerning the question. We have two or three questions every quarter. That for to-morrow is, whether the immortality of the human soul is probable from natural reason? It comes in course for me to

of the Junior Sophister year, is more important and busy than any other in the four years. Mr. Williams' [1] lectures on natural philosophy render it so. His course consists of twenty-four lectures, thirteen of which we have already had. I have hitherto taken minutes while he was speaking, and written off after I came out as much as I could recollect of them. Some of my class have told me they were not worth the time and pains I have spent upon them; but I think they are, as they may serve to fix firmer in my mind the principles of an important branch of science, which I never before have studied. In my last letter to you I requested Desagulier's translation of 's Gravesande's in two volumes octavo.[2] There is 4to edition, but the other is that which is studied here. They are very scarce in this country, as they can neither be bought, nor borrowed out of college. We begin to recite in them tomorrow, but I shall endeavor to borrow them of some classmate for the two weeks we shall recite in them this quarter, and I hope to receive one before I shall have occasion for it again. This is the last quarter in which we recite in the languages. The next year we shall be confined to mathematics, natural philosophy and metaphysics. We shall finish Locke on the Understanding before the end of this year, and begin on Reid on the Mind. Our progress here is very slow, but we have so many things to attend to at once, that it cannot well be otherwise.

affirm; and in this case it makes the task much easier. It so happens that whatever the question may be, I must support it." *To his mother*, May 15, 1786. Ms. Adams' Diary while at Harvard College is summarized in Henry Adams, *Historical Essays*, 80.

[1] Samuel Williams (1743–1817), Hollis professor of mathematics and natural philosophy in Harvard College, 1780–1788.

[2] William Jacob 's Gravesande's *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy*, translated by John Theophilus Desaguliers, London.

I received a few days since your favor of March 19th, and at the same time, from my sister, Colonel Humphreys' poem,[1] which I think superior to the former. Among its beauties is a very happy imitation of a famous passage in Virgil, Æn. 6. 847, etc. It is in the 30th page:[2]

Let other climes of other produce boast, etc.

I think it is, as Boileau says of himself, "même, en imitant, toujours original." America appears to hasten towards perfection in the fine arts, and any country would boast of a Belknap as an historian, a Dwight as a poet, and a West as a painter. There are in this University, one or two students, (now Senior Sophisters,) who promise fair to become very good poets. One of them, by the name of Fowle,[3] was appointed a few days since to deliver a valedictory poem on the 21st of June, and it is said, has another assigned him as a part at Commencement. There is among the governors of the college one, who for genius and learning, would make a figure in any part of Europe. I mean the Librarian, Mr. Winthrop.[4] He has lately discovered a method of trajecting an angle, which has so long been attempted in vain. Mr. Sewall[5] too, the former Hebrew Professor, is now producing his talents. He was obliged to resign, because it was said he was addicted to drinking. He most sacredly declared, at the time, that the accusation was false. It has been said as an argument to prove he was subject to the vice that his mental faculties were impaired. To show that this was not the fact, he

[1] *A Poem on the Happiness of America.*

[2] Line 569 *et seq.*

[3] Robert Fowle (1766–1847).

[4] James Winthrop (1752–1821), who served as librarian of the College 1772–1787, and also had repute as a jurist.

[5] Stephen Sewall (1734–1804). In 1764 he became the first Hancock professor of Hebrew in Harvard, and held that position until 1785.

has undertaken to translate Young's *Night Thoughts* into Latin verse. The first night is to be published soon. The work may be considered as a curiosity, and I shall send one as soon as they are printed.[1]

June 14th. I have been so busy, since the date of the former part of this letter, that I have not been able to finish it. I have taken in writing extracts of all I remember of the lectures upon natural philosophy. The course finished last Saturday, and I have now the disposal of my time, much more than I had before. The performances at Commencement are distributed, and are more numerous than they ever have been before. It is a doubt at present whether this is only a mark of favor to the class that is about to graduate, because it is said to be one of the best classes taken collectively, for genius, and learning, that has ever gone through College; or whether it is the intention of the government for the future to increase the number of good parts, as they are called. Hitherto about two thirds of each class have had syllogistic disputes to perform at Commencement, and as they are never attended to, they are held in detestation by the scholars, and everyone thinks it a reflection upon his character as a genius and a student to have a syllogistic; this opinion is the firmer, because the best scholars almost always have other parts. There are many disadvantages derived from these syllogisms, and I know only of one benefit, which is this. Many scholars would go through college without studying at all, but would idle away all their time, who merely from the horrors of syllogisms begin to study, acquire a fondness for it, and make a very pretty figure in college; and it is not uncom-

[1] *Nocte cogita, Auctore, anglice scripta.* Printed in Charlestown [Caroloppidi], 1786. Sewall's Mss. in Harvard University bear witness to his learning and industry.

mon to see young fellows, the most idle in a class the two first years, have the reputation of great students, and good scholars the two latter.

The next Commencement there will be delivered two English poems, two English orations, two Latin orations, a Greek dialogue, three forensic disputes, and an English dialogue between four. *Thompson*, a young gentleman from Newbury, has one of the English orations. He is generally supposed to be the most distinguished character in College. It is said by his classmates that he will outshine Harry Otis, who will deliver at the same time an oration upon taking his second degree; but it is now a doubt whether Thompson will appear, as he is very unwell. He has injured his health by hard study, and it is feared he has a slow fever.[1]

The bridge at Charlestown is very nearly completed. Next Saturday being the 17th of June, there is to be a long procession over the bridge, and an entertainment for six hundred persons provided on Bunkers Hill.[2] I know of no news, as I am here quite retired. It is now eight weeks since this quarter began. Near as we are to Boston, I have been there only once in that time. A person who wishes to make any figure as a scholar at this University, must not spend much time either in visiting or in being visited.

I have one more request to add to those I have already made. It is for Blair's Lectures[3] in octavo, so that they may be in the same form with the sermons, and because an octavo is much more convenient than a quarto. Your dutiful son.

[1] The prophecy was in part fulfilled, for Thomas W. Thompson (1766–1821) represented New Hampshire in both branches of the national legislature.

[2] See *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 21, 1786.

[3] *Lectures on Rhetoric*, first published in 1783.

TO JOHN ADAMS

CAMBRIDGE, August 30th, 1786.

DEAR SIR:

I received a few days agone your favor of June 2nd. You mention an affair, concerning which I had determined to write in the beginning of this quarter. I have thought much of an office in which to study the law. Should you return home next spring and be yourself at leisure to instruct me, I should certainly prefer that to studying anywhere else. But if you are still detained in Europe, I should wish to live in some place where there might be society sufficient for relaxation at times, but not enough to encourage dissipation. Boston I should for several reasons wish to avoid. The principal ones are that it is unfavorable to study, and that it would be almost doubly expensive. Mr. Parsons[1] of Newbury, has been mentioned, and I should be very glad to study with him. However it is not perhaps a matter of much consequence whose office I am in, if my time is well spent in it. I look forward with mingled pain and pleasure to the time when I shall finish the collegiate term. I have made it my endeavor to be intimate only with the best characters in my class, and there are several with whom I enjoy many social half hours. As our pursuits are confined here merely to literature, it is necessary to be a very close student in order to acquire a respectable character. Out of an hundred and forty students that are here, there is undoubtedly every grade, from the most amiable disposition to the worst, from the smallest genius to the greatest, and from the complete ignoramus to the youth of learning. There are some who do not study

[1] Theophilus Parsons (1750–1813). See *Memoir of Theophilus Parsons*, by his son, Boston, 1861.

twelve hours in the course of a twelvemonth, and some who study as much almost every day, and it always happens that their reputation is in an exact ratio to the attention they pay to studying. The good scholar is esteemed, even by the idle; but the bad one is despised as much by those who are like him, as he is by the judicious. This is the common course, but in these peaceful mansions there is the same spirit of intrigue and party, and as much inclination to cabal, as may be discovered at courts. It has not the same opportunities to show itself, and remains for the most part concealed; but there are certain circumstances and situations in which it breaks forth with great vehemence. This has lately been the case with my class. It is customary early in the first quarter of the senior year for each class to meet and choose by ballot one of its members to deliver a valedictory oration on the ensuing 21st of June, and four others to collect the theses, which are published by the class when they take their degrees. [We] have lately gone through this business. There were different parties for three persons as orator, and there was a great deal of intriguing carried on. One only could be successful, and *Little*,[1] of Newburyport, was finally chosen, a person, who to an excellent genius, unites an amiable disposition, and an unblemished moral character. The class did me the honor to choose me among the theses collectors, and for the mathematical part.[2] Little did I think, when you gave me those lessons at Auteuil, which you call our suppers, that they would be productive of this effect.[3] It is a la-

[1] Moses Little (1766–1811).

[2] "I am the more pleased to learn that you are to collect the mathematical theses, as the same part fell to my share in the year 1755." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, January 10, 1787. Ms.

[3] The father speaks in a letter of April 2, 1786, of "our Greek breakfasts at the Hague, and our Euclid suppers at Auteuil." Ms.

borious task, and will confine my studies for the ensuing year much more to the mathematics than I should have done if I had been left to my own disposal. . . .

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

CAMBRIDGE, December 30, 1786.

. . . . . .

As for public affairs I have a great aversion even to thinking of them; and near as we are to Boston, I should know nothing concerning them, if riots, insurrections, and anarchy were not at this time the only topics of conversation. The people in four or five counties of this State are distracted, and several hundreds of men have repeatedly taken arms, and prevented the sitting of the Court of Common Pleas. In Worcester, Berkshire, and Hampshire, the people in general are said to be discontented, and to complain of taxation, of the Court of Common Pleas, of the salaries of public officers, and of debts, public and private. All these are, they think, intolerable grievances, and they wish to abolish them. In the other counties, however, the people are quiet, and in general firmly attached to their constitution. Among the rioters that have appeared several times in opposition to the courts of justice, there has not been one man of any reputation in the State; and there have been consequently a number of leaders. Three of them have lately been taken, and it is probable the others will soon share the same fate. The insurrections are not immediately dangerous, but our government has not sufficient vigor and energy to suppress them at once. There has appeared in the councils a degree of timidity and irresolution, which does no honor to the executive power of a commonwealth. It is said to have arisen chiefly from the

second citizen in the State, who is now distinguished by the ludicrous nick-name of the *Old Lady*.[1] I am, however, in hopes that in two or three months the public tranquillity will be completely restored. I suspect that the present form of government will not continue long, for while the idle and extravagant, and consequently the poor, complain of its being oppressive, the men of property and consideration think the constitution gives too much liberty to the unprincipled citizen, to the prejudice of the honest and industrious. The opinion that a pure democracy appears to much greater advantage in speculation than when reduced to practice gains ground, and bids fair for popularity. I feared that by having received so large a share of my education in Europe, my attachment to a republican government would not be sufficient for pleasing my countrymen; but I find on the contrary that I am the best republican here, and with my classmates, if I ever have any disputes on the subject, I am always obliged to defend that side of the question. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BRAINTREE, June 30th, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I am at length released from the multiplicity of business which has employed so much of my time for the last eighteen months. During that period I had scarcely a leisure moment, and was forced to a degree of application which has been injurious to my health. But as I am left at present free from every employment, I shall have time to recruit, and I shall also be able to give more frequent testimonies of the attachment to my friends in Europe, who perhaps

[1] Thomas Cushing (1725–1788), lieutenant-governor of the State.

have just grounds to complain of my neglecting to write, notwithstanding all that I have offered for my justification. On the 20th of the present month I concluded my collegiate course and returned here, as the Senior class are always dismissed four weeks before Commencement. At an exhibition which took place at the beginning of April, I delivered the inclosed piece upon the profession of the law. Two of my classmates performed at the same time, one of which spoke upon physic and the other upon divinity.[1] The comparative utility of these professions was the topic, and the performance was honored with the approbation of the audience. It may savour perhaps of vanity in me to mention this circumstance, and I should have said nothing of it was it not from the hope that it would afford satisfaction to the best of parents. I have allotted to me for Commencement an English oration, upon the importance and necessity of public faith to the well-being of a community. The subject is noble and of the greatest consequence. It deserves a more able defender, and indeed requires it; for our public faith at present is in a sad condition. I am led unaware into political ground, and now I am there I must indulge myself.

Mr. Hancock was again elected governor this year, and out of 18,000 votes he had more than 13,000. This plainly shows that the people in general are displeased with some part of Mr. Bowdoin's conduct; but it is the caprice of an ungrateful populace, for which it must ever be impossible to account. Mr. Hancock is very much involved in debt, if common report be true. It is even confidently asserted that his present estate would not by any means do justice

[1] This paper is found with the letter. It is entitled "A Conference upon the comparative Utility of Law, Physic and Divinity," and the other two speakers were Moses Little and Nathaniel Freeman. The paper was "spoken" on April 10.

to his creditors. It is therefore concluded that he would favor tender acts, paper currencies, and all those measures which would give the sanction of the law to private fraud and villany. It was supposed that a Senate and an House of Representatives would be chosen, perfectly willing to abolish all contracts public and private, ready in short to redress the people's grievances, that is, to gratify their passions and justify their crimes. But these fears were not entirely well grounded. There are indeed several Senators and many representatives who would stick at nothing. A Willard,[1] a Drury,[2] a Whitney,[3] and many others who have openly espoused the cause of treason and rebellion, are now among the legislators of the country. *Intestinam aliquam quotidie perniciem reipublicae molientes.* There is however in both branches of the legislature a majority of well-meaning men, who will support the dignity of the government, and who will not prostitute the honor of their country. A motion was made a few days since that a committee should be appointed to examine the merits of a paper currency, and to report upon the expediency of an emission at present. But there was a majority of more than fifty, even against the committing it. It has been resolved that the Court should move out of the town of Boston, and the committee have finally recommended Concord as the most proper place to which it may be removed. The people in the country are very earnest in this point, and as usual without knowing why. The salaries of all civil officers, which are now too small, will infallibly be reduced still lower. Mr. Hancock, who has a peculiar talent of pleasing the multitude, has compounded this mat-

[1] Two of the name of Willard were in the new House, Dr. Samuel, of Uxbridge, and Jacob, of Ashburnham.

[2] Luke Drury, of Grafton.

[3] Josiah Whitney, of Harvard.

ter by offering to make a present to the public of 300£.[1] But I consider this as a pernicious precedent, a palliative worse than it would have been, had the legislature curtailed the salary. For if one man gives up 300£, another, fishing equally for popularity, may give more, and the chair of government may finally be offered to the lowest bidder. It is impossible for a free nation to subsist without parties, and unfortunately our parties are not yet formed. The democratical branch of our government is at present quite unrivalled, and we severely feel the want of sufficient strength in the other branches. The Senate indeed has several times within these eighteen months saved the Commonwealth from complete anarchy, and perhaps from destruction; but its hands are tied, and the people are too generally disposed to abolish the Senate as an useless body. I have indeed great hopes that the "Defence of the Constitutions" will produce an alteration in their sentiments. It will certainly have great weight. One printer in Boston is employed in printing a new edition of this book,[2] and another is retailing it twice a week, in a news paper,[3] so that I hope it will be sufficiently spread throughout the Commonwealth. As to the monarchical power, it appears to be entirely out of the question, and unless by a revolution it be established upon the ruin of the two others, it will never possess influence sufficient to hold the balance between them.

There was this year no choice of a lieutenant governor by the people. Mr. Cushing[4] and General Lincoln were the primary candidates. Mr. Gorham and General Heath

[1] See *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 27, 1787.

[2] Edmund Freeman. The book appeared in 1788.

[3] The *Massachusetts Gazette*, beginning June 22, and running to September 7, 1787.

[4] Thomas Cushing and Nathaniel Gorham.

had likewise some hundreds of votes. The House sent up Mr. Cushing and Mr. Gorham to the Senate, because General Lincoln was a military character. The Senate were unanimous in favor of Mr. Cushing, who will probably drop at the next election. Mr. Adams [1] has been much opposed to General Lincoln, and had sufficient influence to prevent his being chosen even as a councillor, because he is a member of the Society of Cincinnati. It is strange that no one dares attack this institution openly. It is daily acquiring strength, and will infallibly become a body dangerous, if not fatal to the Constitution. Immediately after the death of General Greene, it was asked by one of the State Societies that his eldest son, at the age of eighteen should take his seat as a member. I was perfectly astonished to see no notice taken of this measure by the public. By dropping the hereditary part of the constitution, they will after some time reduce themselves to a small number, and by admitting the sons of the most distinguished characters, they obtain their end, as completely as if it were professedly hereditary. But as they are not immediately dangerous, and there are so many other difficulties that engage the attention of the public, nothing is said, or done upon the subject, and they are suffered to take their own course.[2] A free people always were and always will be ready to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.[3] . . .

[1] Samuel Adams.

[2] The subject of the Cincinnati had been much discussed in 1784, and the general unpopularity of the institution fully developed. John Adams, then in Europe, wrote in severe terms of it to Lafayette (*Works of John Adams*, VIII. 192), and he was not alone in believing the newly formed society "against the spirit of our governments and the genius of our people."

[3] "I consider as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life that I came from Europe as I did; it has been of great and real service to me in many particulars. It has reduced my opinion of myself and of my future prospects to a nearer level with truth; so that making allowances for the general exaggerations of youth,

TO JEREMY BELKNAP

BRAINTREE, August 6, 1787.

SIR,

I received your favor of the 3d instant, and am really at a loss how to return you my thanks for the undeserved expression of politeness which it contains. With respect to the publication of my performance,[1] I wish equally to avoid

I do not overrate myself more than people in general are apt to do. It has enabled me to form an intimate friendship with a number of worthy characters of the same standing in life with myself; and it has been the means of turning my attention to several important branches of study, which otherwise I must have neglected. There are at the university two private societies formed upon a similar plan to that which you mention in one of your late letters. Of these societies friendship is the soul, and literary improvement the object; and consequently neither of them is numerous. I was received as a member of both those societies very soon after my admission at the university, and I am certain that the institutions are of great service to those who belong to them. In short I am now so firmly persuaded of the superior advantages of a public education, that I only regret I did not enter the university a year and a half sooner than I did." *To his mother*, August 1, 1787. Ms.

[1] On Wednesday July 18, at the commencement exercises at the University in Cambridge, Adams delivered an oration "Upon the importance and necessity of Publick Faith to the well-being of a community." A writer in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, of July 21, said: "The two principal performances were the Orations by Mr. *Adams* and Mr. *Freeman*. The first of these certainly declaimed upon a well-chosen subject, in a manly, sensible and nervous style of eloquence. The public expectations from this gentleman, being the son of an Ambassador, the favourite of the officers of the college, and having enjoyed the highest advantages of European instruction, were greatly inflated. The performance justified the preconceived partiality. He is warmly attached to the republican system of his father, and descanted upon the subject of public justice with great energy. Mr. Adams's indisputable superiour, in style, elegance and oratory, is the graceful Mr. *Freeman*. It is thought almost impossible for him to exceed his accomplished rival who spoke before him — but to *Freeman* every thing was easy. They were both considerably agitated when they arose, and seemed to recover a decent confidence after the same interval. *Freeman* was not deficient in energy of diction — in mellifluousness he was unequalled. He had happily imitated that plain and just model of eloquence which has been attended with the most flattering success in this country.

giving any just ground for a charge of presumption or of obstinacy. The reason which induced me to wish that Harris's[1] poem might be published was that I supposed it might in some measure serve as a justification for me. But I fear, Sir, that persons of judgment and candor who were present at Commencement, and who would therefore be proper judges of the comparative merit of the performances on that day would be displeased to see mine alone in print, and would reasonably think it a breach of common decency in me to consent to it. This is my objection. I only request that you would weigh it in your own mind, and I will leave it to you to determine whether I ought not to prevent the publication. Judge me impartially, and without favor and I shall readily submit to your decision.

If you should finally conclude to have it printed, I do not wish that anything should be said respecting the difficulty of obtaining a copy; any preface of that kind could at best only palliate my faults, and would only give an air of importance to the piece, which it does not deserve, and which it could not support. Apologies of this nature never have any influence upon impartial persons, and these are the only characters I am fearful of offending.

To the publication of the name my objections are more numerous and still stronger than to the other point. In several collegiate performances which have heretofore been published the names are omitted: indeed, I do not recollect that I ever saw one with the name before it. If the piece is said to have been delivered by one of the candidates for the bachelor's degree at the last Commence-

In short, these young gentlemen discovered those qualities that must ensure them eminence, and we hope for the sake of their country, they may be rivals in the cultivation of those talents through life." On an alleged intrigue in the distribution of the commencement honors see *Massachusetts Centinel*, September 15, 1787.

[1] Thaddeus Mason Harris (1768–1842).

ment, I confess I cannot see of what importance it can be, either to the university, or to the public, that the individual person should be named. And if my father has been so fortunate as to render services of importance to his countrymen, that is certainly no reason why they should be prejudiced in favor of his son.

I have, however, such an implicit confidence in your judgment, that I shall leave even this point to your final determination: and if you think these reasons sufficiently valid, you will be so kind as to return the oration to Mr. Foster, who will transmit it to me. With every sentiment of esteem and respect, I remain, Sir, etc.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

NEWBURYPORT, December 23d, 1787.

DEAR MADAM:

It is a long time since I wrote you last, but I am perfectly weary of making apologies. I have no doubt but my friends will forgive me, when they recollect the causes which have prevented me from informing them frequently of those trivial events, which the partiality of friendship alone can render interesting. When I was last in Boston which was about two months ago, I wrote a few hasty lines to my father, intending to write more largely soon after my return to this place. I have delayed fulfilling my intentions from time to time, either from the want of an opportunity, or from the multiplicity of my employments, and even now, I know not whether this letter will go within these three months.

In the beginning of September I came to this town, and began the study of the law with Mr. Parsons. I could not possibly have an instructor more agreeable than this

gentleman. His talents are great, his application has been indefatigable, and his professional knowledge is surpassed by no gentleman in the Commonwealth. The study itself is far from being so destitute of entertainment as I had been led to expect.[1] I have read three or four authors with pleasure as well as improvement, and the imaginary terrors of tediousness and disgust, have disappeared, upon the first approach. But in their stead other fears have arisen which create more anxiety in my mind, and which will increase rather than subside. The popular odium which has been excited against the practitioner in this Commonwealth prevails to so great a degree, that the most innocent and irreproachable life cannot guard a lawyer against the hatred of his fellow citizens. The very despicable writings of Honestus [2] were just calculated to kindle a flame which will subsist long after they are forgotten. The author after being hoisted by this weak instrument into the Senate has already returned to his native insignificancy, and under the new adopted signature of Candidus, defends a good cause without ability and without success. But the poison has been so extensively communicated, that its infection will not easily be stopped. A thousand lies in addition to those published in the papers have been spread all over the country, to prejudice the people against the *order*, as it has invidiously been called; and as a free people will not descend to disguise their sentiments, the gentlemen of the profession have been treated with contemptuous neglect, and with insulting abuse. But notwithstanding all

[1] The diary of Adams while at Newburyport, and covering the period from August 9, 1787, to September 18, 1789, was printed by Charles Francis Adams in 2 *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, XVI. 291, and in separate form, *Life in a New England Town: 1787, 1788*. Boston, 1903.

[2] Benjamin Austin (1752–1820), whose tract *Observations on the pernicious Practice of the Law* appeared in 1786.

this the profession is increasing rapidly in numbers, and the little business to be done is divided into so many shares, that they are in danger of starving one another. When I consider these disadvantages, which are in a degree peculiar to the present time, and those which at all times subsist; when I reflect that good abilities, great application, and a favorable fortune are requisite to acquire that eminence in the profession which can insure a decent subsistence, I confess I am sometimes almost discouraged, and ready to wish I had engaged in some other line of life. But I am determined not to despond. With industry and frugality, with patience and perseverance, it will be very hard if I cannot go through the world with honor. I am most resolutely determined not to spend my days in a dull tenor of insipidity. I never shall be enough of a stoic to raise myself beyond the reach of fortune. But I hope I shall have so much resolution as shall enable me to receive prosperity without growing giddy and extravagant, or adversity without falling into despair.

I board at a Mrs. Leathers's,[1] a good old woman, who even an hundred years ago would have stood in no danger of being hanged for witchcraft. She is however civil and obliging, and what is very much in her favor, uncommonly silent; so that if I am deprived of the charms, I am also free from the impertinence of conversation. There is one boarder beside myself — a Dr. Kilham,[2] (I hope the name will not scare you) one of the representatives from this town, a very worthy man, and a man of sense and learning. Was it not for him I should be at my lodgings as solitary as an hermit. There is a very agreeable society in the town, though I seldom go into company.

[1] She lived on State Street, near Parsons' office.

[2] Daniel Kilham.

I passed two or three days at Haverhill, about a month ago, and had the pleasure of finding Mr. Thaxter.[1] From the severest censurer of every trifling attentions between lovers, he became as fond a shepherd as ever was celebrated in the annals of Arcadia. He expects some peculiar animadversions from you, for his desertion of principles, which he formerly boasted were so deeply rooted in his mind. But it is the old story of Benedick. The absurdity is not in abandoning a vain, ineffectual resolution, but it is in pretending to adopt a resolution, which every day may be rendered futile.

I have frequently been prevented from expatiating in my letters upon political topics by the sterility of the subject; an uncommon fertility now produces the same effect. I can only say in general terms that parties run very high, and that we are most probably at the eve of a revolution. Whether it will be effected in silence, and without a struggle, or whether it will be carried at the point of the sword, is yet a question. The newspapers will show you how much the public is engaged in the discussion of the new continental form of government, which I fear will be adopted.

From the remainder of the family you will probably hear, by the same opportunity that is to convey this. When I last heard from my brothers they were well. Your ever affectionate son.

[1] John Thaxter, Jr. (1755–1791). See *Works of John Adams*, index.

TO JOHN ADAMS

NEWBURYPORT, June 28th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

Three months have elapsed since my return to this town. My health has been restored beyond my expectations, and I have been able without injuring it, to devote a larger portion of my time to study than I hoped to when I left Braintree. Lord Coke, Saunders, Hale and Blackstone have contributed to add to my small stock of professional knowledge, and I have made some researches into the doctrine of pleading. My greatest apprehensions at present are with respect to the practical part of the profession. The skill to apply general knowledge to particular cases is no less important than the knowledge itself; and a new piece of mechanism will often perform its operations with great irregularity, however well it may be constructed. I remain still in a state of irresolution and suspense with respect to the place of my future residence. I have consulted Mr. Parsons upon the subject: he said he could not advise me so well at present, as he might after the federal judiciary system shall be established, because he knew not what vacancies might be created by that circumstance. He however hinted that if either himself or Mr. Bradbury[1] should be removed he should recommend this place to me. I know not what his own expectations are; but I have some reason to suppose he has his eye upon two offices, those of the district judge and Attorney General, either of which I believe would suit him well. And by his putting the supposition of his being taken off

[1] Theophilus Bradbury (1739–1803), in 1797 appointed a judge of the Massachusetts Supreme Court.

from the practice, I have conjectured that there was in his own mind an idea of the probability of his appointment. As I believe his talents are much better calculated to administer laws than to make them, I wish he may succeed.[1] Perhaps even an involuntary consideration of my own interest has some effect to give a bias to my opinion. I am the more free to make this confession, because I suppose the appointments are all adjusted ere this and I shall not therefore appear in the humiliating light of a solicitor, which I wish ever to avoid, and in which I am well persuaded I should be unsuccessful were I now to assume it.

As our newspapers are probably transmitted to you with regularity, I can give you very little news in the public line. The very great majority of votes by which Mr. H[ancock] was reelected, and the influence which was successfully exerted for Mr. A[dams], appeared somewhat singular after the event of all the contests relating to the federal elections.[2] There have been a variety of subordinate political manœuvres in the choice of representatives of the different towns. Those in Boston you have undoubtedly been informed of. There was in this town a faint struggle for a change in the representation, but the old members came in with a respectable majority.

Our General Court, after sitting about a month, and busying themselves upon the subject of finance just suffi-

[1] Gore, who was about to receive the office of United States district attorney for Massachusetts, thus passes upon the candidates for district judge: "[James] Sullivan is well qualified in point of capacity, but the world says that his heart is not true. Parsons in a superior degree is qualified as a lawyer, but as a man he possesses not one qualification. [Francis] Dana is talked of, and were his health not very uncertain, he would undoubtedly be a fit man. [William] Tudor and [W.] Wetmore are likewise candidates. . . . They are both honest men, and the latter a *painstaking* lawyer, as the phrase is." *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 367.

[2] Samuel Adams took the oath as lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, May 27, 1789.

cient to refer it over to the next session, have adjourned to some time in January, when it will be too late in the political year to adopt any decisive measures. There has been a scheme on foot for sinking our State debt by means of a lottery. From Mr. Parsons's conversation I have supposed that the plan originated with him, and in his speculative principles he thinks it would reconcile the claims of public justice with the interests of an impotent debtor. The proposal was to redeem £40,000 of the debt by refunding only £10,000 in specie to the adventurers. Besides the impropriety of encouraging a gambling disposition among the people, I confess the plan appears to me equally inconsistent with the dignity of a sovereign state and with the integrity of an honest debtor. For whatever expedients may be used to conceal or disguise the iniquity of the transaction, nothing can be more clear than that where a debt of £40,000 is paid with 10,000 the creditor must be defrauded. The bill passed in the House by a majority of 73 to 52, but was non-concurred by the Senate.[1] . . .

The proceedings of Congress have almost entirely superseded all other subjects of political speculation. The revenue bill has hitherto chiefly engaged the public attention. The original duty upon molasses exceedingly alarmed many of our West India merchants, and whatever may be said of discarding all local and personal considerations, they

[1] "Till the intention of Congress is known relative to the assumption of funds, the state cannot, with propriety, make any arrangement for the payment of their debts. If the national government could assume the different State debts, the consequence I should presume would be greatly beneficial to America. But if attempted, this must be done speedily. That it will tend to a consolidation of the union will presently be foreseen and therefore objected to by State demagogues." *Gore to King*, June 7, 1789. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 362. Hamilton did not become Secretary of the Treasury until September of this year

have not, I believe, been so much pleased with any act of the President of the Senate, as his turning the vote for reducing the duty to three cents.[1] This observation however only applies to a few, for I do not know that the circumstance is generally known. The judiciary bill has not yet been published here. I had a transient sight of a copy, which I believe Mr. Dalton sent. Mr. Parsons thinks six judges will not be enough, and objects to the joining the district judge to the other two in the circuits, because it gives him a casting voice in affirming his own decisions. I am, etc.[2]

ADDRESS TO PRESIDENT WASHINGTON BY THE CITIZENS OF NEWBURYPORT[3]

November, 1789.

When by the unanimous suffrages of your countrymen you were called to preside at her councils, the citizens of the town of Newbury Port participated in the general joy arising from a pleasing anticipation of an administration conducted by one to whose

[1] This was an error, as John Adams pointed out in his reply.

[2] The United States Circuit Courts remained in existence until January 1, 1912, being abolished by the act of March 3, 1911.

[3] "I was not one of the choir who *welcomed* the President to *New England's shore*, upon his arrival here by land. I was, however, in the procession which was formed here to receive him in humble imitation of the Capital. And when he left us, I was one of the *respectable citizens* (as our newspapers term them) who escorted him on horse-back to the lines of New Hampshire. . . . I had the honor of paying my respects to the President upon his arrival in this town, and he did me the honor to recollect that he had seen me a short time before, at New York. I had the honor of spending part of the evening in his presence at Mr. Jackson's. I had the honor of breakfasting in the same room with him the next morning at Mr. Dalton's. I had the honor of writing the billet which the major general of the county sent him to inform him of the military arrangements he had made for his reception. And I had the honor of draughting an address, which with many alterations and additions (commonly called amendments) was presented to him by the town of Newburyport." — *To Abigail Adams*, December 5, 1789. Ms.

exertions they felt themselves so much indebted for their inestimable freedom.

At the present moment they indulge themselves in sentiments in joy resulting from principles perhaps less elevated, but equally dear to their hearts; from the gratification of their affection in beholding personally among them, the friend, the benefactor, the father of his country.

They cannot hope, Sir, to exhibit any peculiar marks of attachment to your person, since in expressing the feelings of the warmest and sincerest gratitude, they could only re-echo the sentiments which are impressed upon the hearts of all their fellow citizens as deeply as upon their own. But in justice to themselves, they think they are authorized to assure you, that in no part of the United States are those sentiments of gratitude and affection more cordial and sincere, than in the town which at this time is honored by your presence.

TO JOHN ADAMS

NEWBURYPORT, March 19, 1790.

DEAR SIR:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of two letters from you, of the 9th and of the 19th of last month, the former of which I received, about three weeks ago, while I was at Boston, attending upon the session of our Supreme Court, and the latter came to hand but two days since. I hope I shall ever feel suitably grateful for the tender solicitude which you express with respect to my future prospects, and I trust I shall always be sufficiently sensible of the weight and importance of your advice and directions to regulate my conduct. The principal subject of both your letters has been long a matter of contemplation to my own mind. I have been for some months expecting the judicial appointments, upon the presumption that some vacancies might be made, which would open a way for making a more

advantageous settlement in some part of the Commonwealth than there could be while those gentlemen, who were best qualified for seats upon the bench, were still at the Bar. But the appointments are now made, and have not produced the smallest alteration in the prospects of a young candidate for practice. Mr. Paine, the late Attorney General, never did any other business than that of the Commonwealth,[1] though Mr. Sullivan, to the same office, unites the greatest quantity of civil business of any gentleman at the Bar.[2] Mr. Cushing [3] was not even a practitioner, so that notwithstanding the disposal of those three important offices, the state of practice remains almost wholly as it was before.

It has become necessary, however, for me to determine speedily upon the spot of my future residence. And in reflecting upon the subject, my mind has chiefly hesitated between this town, Boston and Braintree. It was at one period expected that Mr. Bradbury,[4] who lives at Newburyport, would supply the place upon the bench which was vacated by the removal of Judge Sewall.[5] Had this circumstance taken place, I should have been strongly inclined to make an experiment in this place, where a residence of three years has already made me better known than I should be in any other situation, and where an agreeable circle of acquaintance would render the station peculiarly pleasing, so far as respects the intercourse of society.

[1] Robert Treat Paine (1731–1814) was appointed Attorney-General of Massachusetts in 1780, and remained in that office until 1790, when he became a judge of the Supreme Court.

[2] James Sullivan was Attorney-General of Massachusetts from 1790 to 1807, when he was elected governor.

[3] Nathan Cushing.

[4] Theophilus Bradbury.

[5] David Sewall, of York, who was appointed, in 1789, United States Judge of the district of Maine.

But with the small proportion of business which is done in the county of Essex, it must be a folly to expect encouragement for a youth in a town, where besides Mr. Parsons and Mr. Bradbury there are two other gentlemen of the profession. As I could live at less expense at Braintree, than in Boston, and perhaps should have less avocations from my studies, I should without hesitation go there, and reside at least for two or three years; but my cousin, Mr. Cranch,[1] will be there, and by opening offices in the same town we could only divide the small pittance which either of us singly might obtain. I could not in that case board in his father's family. There is not another family in the town (at least in that part of the town) where I could board with any convenience, and to live alone in one of your houses, besides the unpleasant circumstances of a life so solitary, would I think be quite as expensive as to live in Boston, especially when it is considered that it would be necessary for me to be as much as one-third part of my time in that town to attend upon the sessions of the several judicial courts. Boston therefore remains alone, upon which I am by a kind of necessity constrained to fix my choice. I cannot say I am pleased with the manners of the town, and I trust the opportunities and temptations to dissipation, which I shall probably find there, have no influence upon my determination, unless to increase the reluctance with which I make it. I have consulted with Dr. Tufts,[2] with Judge Dana, and with Dr. Welsh[3] upon the subject, and they all agree in the opinion that I can do no better than to fix upon Boston, and as you have in one of your last letters expressed your approbation of the measure, there remains little doubt in my mind, but that

[1] William Cranch, later chief justice of the Circuit Court, Washington, D.C.
[2] Cotton Tufts (1731–1815). [3] Thomas Welsh (1752–1831).

I shall put it into execution. The prospect, it is true, is not encouraging; but if a resolute determination to make my own way, in conjunction with the small talents which have been allotted to me, are sufficient to procure me even a moderate degree of success, I hope I shall not be much longer a burden to the kindest and most generous of parents.

With respect to the article of board, it would not I imagine be easy to find a family who would resign the front room and chamber, as there is but one of each in the house, and unless some advantage could be derived from the circumstance of living and keeping an office in the same house, I think it would be preferable to do otherwise. If a tenant can be found, who will upon consideration of a suitable abatement of the rent resign the front room in your house, Dr. Tufts has promised to secure it to me for an office. And Dr. Welsh has made me an offer to board me, and let me have a chamber in a house to which he expects to remove, before I shall have occasion to go into Boston. I did not agree with him upon any settled terms, but I presume he will not demand more than three dollars by the week. In the town I have always given two and one half.

Should my present expectations and intentions be confirmed I shall probably get settled in Boston some time in August,[1] and I shall request your permission to remove thither your law library, which is now at Braintree. The advantage of having such a collection of books around me, will give me perhaps some opportunities, which few of the young gentlemen of the profession have possessed, and they will at least enable me to employ to some purpose a great portion of time which must otherwise lay heavy upon my hands.

[1] In the second week of August he removed to Boston and opened an office in a house on Court Street, belonging to John Adams.

I believe I have said quite enough upon a subject of so little consequence as myself. I wish my information in the political line were such as would enable me to supply you with any interesting communications. The public mind here seems chiefly agitated by the late discussions relative to *discrimination* and to the *assumption* of the debts. The decision upon the former of these subjects, meets with the approbation of almost all the persons with whom I have had opportunities of conversing. But I am apprehensive that unless the consent of the States in their respective legislatures is requested by Congress to the assumption, that measure will be extremely unpopular, even in this Commonwealth, burthened as it is with one of the heaviest debts in the union. And if that consent should be required, I am informed by those who are more connected with political affairs, that even our General Court will never grant it, though in their late session they have not made provision for the payment of a quarter part of the interest upon their debt. New Hampshire, whose debt is comparatively trifling will be still more opposed to this measure. This opposition is not confined to the party who were termed anti-federalists. Some of the most strenuous advocates for the Constitution are alarmed at the prospects of a consolidation of the States and of the dissolution of the particular governments. And they dread to see an article so weighty and important as the State debts taken from one scale and added to the other.

The internal politics of the State are in a state of tranquility, very unusual at this season. The opposers of the Governor, discouraged I presume by the ill success which they have always experienced, seem determined to leave him in quiet possession. He has been confined as usual all winter with the gout, and his judicial appointments

have been the only public circumstances which have for some time past been the subject of animadversion. The appointment of Mr. Paine was rather popular. That of Mr. Cushing was far otherwise. The friends of the Governor only insist upon the disinterested magnanimity of nominating a man who it is said has been invariably opposed to his measures, while his enemies are so far from acknowledging his disinterestedness, that they censure him very highly for nominating to one of the most important offices in the State, a man totally unqualified to sustain it, merely to be freed from his troublesome opposition as a councillor. The late Chief Justice,[1] revered as his character universally is, does not altogether escape censure for recommending so earnestly his cousin to an employment, to which he is almost universally said to be very inadequate. Your dutiful son.

TO JOHN ADAMS

NEWBURYPORT, April 5th, 1790.

DEAR SIR:

I have more than once mentioned to you the state of retirement from political conversation in which I live, and the restraints which I am endeavoring to lay upon a disposition inclining perhaps with too much ardor to feel interested in public occurrences. But it sometimes happens that I am accidentally witness to conversations upon these subjects, from which I collect some trifling information, that I imagine might at least not be unentertaining to you. In general I have supposed that your other correspondents in this quarter would anticipate me, and that I should only employ your time in reading a relation of occurrences

[1] William Cushing, who was, in 1789, appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States.

which would not even have with you the merit of novelty. But from some late letters I have been led (though perhaps erroneously) to imagine your correspondents here have not been so punctual in their communications, as they have been formerly, and I have supposed I might mention some circumstances, which though generally known here might not be public at New York.

It appears to me that the hostile character of our general and particular governments each against the other is increasing with accelerated rapidity. The spirit which at the time when the Constitution was adopted, it was contended would always subsist of balancing one of these governments by the other has I think almost totally disappeared already, and the seeds of two contending factions appear to be plentifully sown. The names of Federalist and Anti-federalist are no longer expressive of the sentiments which they were so lately supposed to contain, and I expect soon to hear a couple of new names, which will designate the respective friends of the national and particular systems. The people are very evidently dividing into these two parties. What the event will be I hardly allow myself to conjecture,

> but my soul asks
> To know when two authorities are up,
> Neither supreme, how soon confusion
> May enter 'twixt the gap of both, and take
> The one by the other.

In point of measures the government of the United States has undoubtedly greatly the advantage. But while they are strengthening their hands by assuming the debts, and by making provision for the support of the public credit, the partisans of our State government are continually upon the rack of exertion to contrive every paltry expedient to

maintain their importance and to check the operations of the government, which they behold with terror. As they can only clamor upon subjects of importance, their active efforts are used in appointing a premature fast, or in opposing the cession of a light house. In the last session of our General Court the light houses in this Commonwealth were not ceded to Congress. And the keeper of that at the entrance of Boston Harbor has been forbidden upon his peril to receive any directions or pay from the federal officer. But the imbecility of our government renders all these exertions the more ridiculous; for while they endeavor to prevent the assumption of their debt, they cannot even provide for the payment of the interest upon it. And they have never yet paid for two light houses at the entrance of this harbor, although they are so solicitous to retain them.

The history of the additional amendments to the Constitution proposed by a joint committee of our two houses, affords further evidence of the petty arts which are used by the enemies to the national union to turn the tide of popular opinion against the national government. Mr. Austin, who, as I have been informed, had the principal agency in that affair, never expected that any amendments would be seriously proposed to Congress by our Legislature; and there is an internal evidence, the report of the Committee, that it was intended for a declamation to the people rather than for amendments to the Constitution. They are not even pretended to be amendments, but after the long commonplace rhapsody upon the dangerous tendency of the government, when we come to the *articles*, we find them pretended to be nothing but *principles* for amendments. The Committee consisted of seven members, of whom only four were present when this report was agreed upon. Mr. Dana who drew it up was one of the absent,

and it is said afterwards declared, that he should have objected to the two last articles (perhaps the most important of the whole number), though he drafted them himself. The two other absent members utterly disclaimed the report, and the chairman, who did not vote, was equally opposed to it. Three members only agreed upon the point, and when they produced the paper in the Senate, they obtained a vote to have a certain number of copies printed. It was then dismissed without being suffered to undergo the test of an examination, and Mr. Austin, I am told, made no scruple to acknowledge that he had answered his purpose.

Yet even when opportunities are presented, where the importance of our own government might be really increased, some other little selfish interested principle steps in, and produces measures calculated to bring it into contempt. The appointment of N. Cushing upon the bench of our Supreme Court has certainly not tended to increase the confidence of the people in that important branch of the government. The appointment was very unpopular; and what perhaps in a political view rendered the measure the more injudicious is, that it is not his integrity but his abilities that are called in question. But personal animosity against the characters who would have added dignity to that station, the apprehension of giving offence to the late Chief Justice, who it is said recommended his cousin too strongly, and the pleasure of removing a troublesome councillor, concurring together, were too powerful even for *anti-federal* principles, and produced we are told a nomination, which could be accounted for upon no other motives. The only liberal and generous measure by which they have pursued their system has been the raising the salaries of our judges, and I fear they would not have suc-

ceeded even in that, had not the personal interest of certain influential men, of very different principles been engaged and assisted to promote it. It is melancholy to observe how much, even in this free country, the course of public events depends upon the private interests and passions of individuals.

But the popularity of the general government is, and for some time to come must continue to be disadvantageously affected by those very exertions to support the public credit, which must eventually strengthen it so effectually. It must suffer, however, chiefly in the seaports and among the merchants who find their interests affected by the operation of the revenue laws. In this town and still more in Salem, there have lately been considerable clamors raised by men who have been the firmest friends to the Constitution; and there is now I presume before Congress a petition from the merchants in this town, praying relief from an evil, which has excited great complaints, but which will probably be remedied without difficulty.

Those people among us who are perpetually upon the search for causes of complaint against the government, are cavilling at the dilatory manner with which the Congress proceed in their business. The decision upon the subject of discrimination has met with general approbation in the circles of company where I have heard it mentioned, and from the complexion of our newspapers, I have concluded that the public opinion, of which so much was said in the debates, is here much in favor of the measure. I do not think indeed that the public opinion can always be collected from newspapers, but they are never silent upon unpopular topics of so great importance. Mr. Madison's reputation has suffered from his conduct in that affair; and Judge Dana is the only man I have known whose character gives

weight to his opinions, that has adopted those of Mr. Madison.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury has in general met with great approbation. I have heard it almost universally spoken of with great applause. Yet I am almost ashamed to acknowledge that I know not how justly it is admired, as I have never read it. This neglect has rather been owing to accident than to inclination, for little as I attend to the public prints I should certainly have noticed a publication of so important a nature, had I been in the way of seeing the *Gazette of the United States* which contains it. I am equally ignorant of the system for the establishment of the militia, which is as much disliked as the treasurer's report is esteemed. The most favorable judgment that I have heard passed upon it was, that however excellent it might be, it would never be submitted to by the people.

I know not but that I shall incur your censure for departing even in this instance from the line which I have prescribed to myself, and losing the lawyer in the politician; and still more for the freedom with which I have expressed myself upon public men and measures. If I should on this occasion meet with your disapprobation, I shall without difficulty observe a more prudent silence upon these subjects in future. The opinions which I have heard expressed are no evidence of the general opinion even throughout the Commonwealth, but in some instances they have been the opinions of men whose influence is great and extensive. But if the information contained in this letter should compensate in your mind for its tediousness, I shall from time to time continue to give you a similar supply.[1] In the meantime I remain your affectionate son.

[1] Upon the expiration of his three years as "clerk" in the office of Mr. Parsons, Adams paid him in full for his tuition, the sum of one hundred pounds lawful money. On August 9, he took possession of his Boston office on Court Street.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BOSTON, August 14, 1790.

MY DEAR MADAM:

I know not of any news. The principal topic of conversation this week has been the arrival of the *Columbia* from an expedition which has carried her round the world. The adventurers after having their expectations raised to the highest pitch, were utterly disappointed, and instead of the immense profits upon which they had calculated, will scarcely have their outsets refunded to them. This failure has given universal astonishment and is wholly attributed to the Captain,[1] whose reputation now remains suspended between the qualifications of egregious knavery and of unpardonable stupidity. Mr. Barrell,[2] I am informed, is not discouraged, but intends to make the experiment once more, and if he should not meet with anybody disposed to second him, they say he will undertake it at his single risk and expense. The people of the vessel have brought home a number of curiosities, similar to those which you have seen at Sir Ashton Lever's Museum. They have likewise brought a native of the Sandwich Islands,[3] who bound himself as a servant to one of the passengers. He was paraded up and down our streets yesterday, in the dress of his country, and as he speaks our language has been conversed with by many gentlemen in this town. One of the passengers it is said has kept a very accurate journal of the voyage and proposes to extract from it a relation for publication.[4] It will probably be curious; though among uncivilized and barbarous nations it appears to me the

[1] John Kendrick. See Bancroft, *History of the Northwest Coast*, I. 185.

[2] Joseph Barrell.

[3] Described as from the island of Atowa.

[4] Probably Robert Haswell, second mate of the companion ship, *Lady Washington*.

observations of travellers must generally consist chiefly in a repetition of what was noticed by the first adventurer who discovered them. The situation of a country and whatever relates to inanimate matter continues the same. The peculiarities of the animal creation when once remarked, seldom afford any further field for information. It is from man that we must always derive our principal source of entertainment and instruction. And although the knowledge of the human heart may perhaps be promoted by inferences drawn from the manners and customs of a people newly discovered, yet the savage inhabitants of a petty island, cannot have many customs or opinions which may not be discoverable to the first man who becomes acquainted with them.[1] . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, September 21st, 1790.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

There are not in the profession many gentlemen inhabiting this town whose characters are remarkably formidable from their respectability. Mr. Sullivan does more business I suppose than any four others put together. I shall carefully remember the cautions in one of your letters respecting him; whatever other qualities he may possess, he may safely be taken as a model for industry and activity. "I believe," said Parson Clarke to [me] the other day "that man has not a particle of indolence in his nature." He treats me civilly, and it is all I wish. I have derived even some instruction from his private conversation as well as

[1] He was now in the family of Dr. Thomas Welsh, to whom his father wrote September 13, 1790, about his prospects in life. *Works of John Adams*, IX. 571.

from his arguments at the bar, and the other day he gave me a caution, which made a singular impression upon my mind. I was sitting next to him within the bar at Concord. He took from his finger a ring, and pointed to me the motto engraved within the rim. It was "Weigh the Consequences." *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.* Perhaps the benefit of the admonition may not be lost in its influence upon my conduct towards the man himself. I have no desire to render my self personally obnoxious to him, and I trust I shall always disdain to court his favor.

Mr. Tudor [1] is an ingenious, amiable, indolent man, who will always make a respectable figure in society, but who has not activity or application enough ever to arrive to the foremost rank of eminence in his profession. Your personal acquaintance with him has made his character better known to you than it is to me; my opinion of him has been formed from the information of persons more conversant with him, and confirmed in some measure by my own observation.

Mr. Dawes,[2] in addition to a similar indolence of disposition, labors under the disadvantage of ill health; he is supported by a very considerable weight of paternal influence, but his exertion has been blunted by the expectation of a large patrimonial property — he married too young. To avoid an early matrimonial connection, was one of the principles which I think I have heard you say was recommended to you by Mr. Gridley.[3] Happiness in life I am fully persuaded must be derived principally form domestic attachments; but a foundation must be laid before

[1] William Tudor (1750–1819), who had studied law in the office of John Adams. A sketch of his career is in 2 *Mass. Hist. Collections*, VIII. 285.

[2] Thomas Dawes, Jun. (1758–1825).

[3] Jeremiah Gridley.

the superstructure can be erected. I hope I am in no danger from this quarter.

Mr. Gore is one of those men whom Cardinal Richelieu would have employed in public affairs.[1] He is a very fortunate man. In his profession he has been remarkably successful; from a combination of circumstances, which a man of inferior abilities to those he possesses might perhaps have improved as well. The family connections have likewise been extremely serviceable to him; and it is said that he has made an independent fortune by speculation in the public funds. I have heard it asserted that he is the richest lawyer in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Amory has also been successfully engaged in speculating upon public securities, as well as Mr. Wetmore [2] and Mr. Otis.[3] This employment does not appear to be very intimately connected with the profession. But these gentlemen I am told have played at that hazardous game with monies deposited in their hands; and have been enabled by the temporary possession of property belonging to foreigners, to become masters of sums to an equal amount before they have been called upon for payment. Amory is very attentive to his business, and has recommended himself by the expedition with which he performs that which is entrusted to him. He is a student too; but I think confines his researches rather too much within the circle of mere professional information.

Otis appears to me to be advancing very rapidly to eminence. There is certainly no man in the town of the profession who unites so many of those qualities which are calculated to attract the popular attention. He has been but four years at the bar, yet excepting Sullivan, I believe

[1] Christopher Gore (1758–1827).

[2] William Wetmore (1749–1830).

[3] Harrison Gray Otis (1765–1848).

there is no one here who has a greater proportion of business. But his ambition has no limits, and I strongly suspect that the honors of a public station have such allurements to his mind that he will catch with ardor at the first opportunity to become a public man. Such an opportunity will perhaps be presented to him before long, and if he should once get entangled in the political web, it may be presumed he will like most others find it inextricable. These are the persons who share among themselves the principal business which is done in this town. Mr. Lowell has a son, who was just sworn into court at the time of his appointment, and to whom he has conveniently left all his unfinished business.[1] The young gentleman has talents, activity and application, with a great degree of confidence in himself; a quality which is not amiable, but which perhaps is very serviceable to him, in helping him forward. His peculiar advantages have given him an unusual share of business, for a person so lately admitted. He is rather disposed to attribute the circumstance to his superior abilities; and expresses some contempt for persons less successful than himself, because depending solely upon their own characters. . . .

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BOSTON, October 17th, 1790.

MY DEAR MADAM:

. . . . . .

You will perceive by our papers that four members of our present delegation in Congress are reëlected.[2] It is

[1] John Lowell (1743–1802) and his son of the same name (1769–1840).

[2] Fisher Ames, Theodore Sedgwick, Elbridge Gerry, and Benjamin Goodhue. "Ames' election in Boston was the highest possible evidence that cou'd be produc'd in favor of the Government. Austin and his friends, with S. Adams, Hancock and Jarvis were open, warm and assiduous in favor of their candidate. Their argu-

not from the partly malevolence of a few contemptible scribblers in our newspapers that the sense of the people is to be collected. Two candidates had been opposed to Mr. Ames,[1] with the intention to divide the votes more effectually, and so much industry and influence were exerted in *their* favor, that the result in *his* favor was beyond the most sanguine expectations of his friends, and the friends of the national honor. In Middlesex, indeed, the votes were more divided. Mr. Gorham [2] is a popular man and, if the public report be not fallacious, he has been indefatigable for these two years past in the pursuit of this election. Mr. Gerry, however, has a respectable majority of votes.

You mention in one of your letters that Mr. Short [3] is commissioned to negotiate the loan. I should wish to know where it is expected he will obtain it. I cannot imagine that the attempt will be made in France, where the nation are so heavily laboring under the weight of their own poverty. Holland, I presume, will be the seat of the negotiation. And I should be glad to be informed what is the opinion of the V[ice] P[resident] with respect to its success. I think the value of public paper must depend considerably upon it.

ments were artfully addressed to the most unguarded parts of the mind of a Boston Patriot. Our friend T. D[awes, Jun.] and his father [Thomas Dawes] were uncommonly industrious in the use of all their influence to attain votes for the little Judge. If reports are true men were hir'd and in daily pay of the former to create a favorable influence in the country, and personal solicitations were used by both. Indeed the most ridiculous and disgraceful stories are told of Thomas; and the event shewed, in a light truly mortifying, the little influence and small effects of dishonorable means. Austin boasts that he had more votes than Dawes, and the latter confesses himself mortified that he was less successful than the former." *Gore to King*, October 23, 1790. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 393.

[1] Benjamin Austin and Thomas Dawes.

[2] Nathaniel Gorham ran against Gerry.

[3] William Short, whom Adams later succeeded as minister to Holland.

Our court of Common Pleas are sitting in this town, and I have made my first essay in addressing a jury. I wish I could add that I had acquitted myself to my own satisfaction. I had very little time for preparation, and did not know the existence of the cause three hours before I spoke to it. From this circumstance, and from the novelty of the situation, added to the diffidence I have always felt of my talent at extemporary speechifying, I was too much agitated to be possessed of proper presence of mind. You may judge of the figure I made.[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, October 19, 1790.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have attended Town meeting, Sir, and it was upon the occasion of the choice of representative for the district. I was indeed not a little diverted at the scene, and derived I believe some little instruction as well as entertainment from it. Three-fourths of the votes in this town were indeed for Mr. Ames, and this perhaps may enable you to

[1] "Upon my return from Law Society this evening, I found my father in my room with a letter in his hand from you to me. He asked me to see what you had written concerning your downfall. Upon opening the letter I soon found what he alluded to, but could find no marks of any downfall. That you should have been somewhat confused upon your first exertion was by no means a matter of astonishment to any of us. The person who is unintimidated upon such occasions has not the common feelings of human nature. There is a pride, a respect, required by the auditors, which makes a little confusion rather pleasing than disagreeable. I think that an harangue of fifteen minutes is by no means despicable for a first essay. Your father was quite consoled when he heard my letter, for that written to Mamma, which he had previously read, had led him to suppose you had failed and suffered a *vox faucibus haesit* in reality." *Charles Adams to John Quincy Adams*, New York, October 21, 1790. Ms. "Dr. Welsh writes that your diffidence was remarked and your tremor observed, when you opened at the Bar." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, December 17, 1790. Ms.

form an opinion respecting the popularity of the general government in this State. Mr. Gerry too is reelected in the district of Middlesex, notwithstanding the whole personal interest of Mr. Gorham and his friends was very strenuously exerted to operate a change. There was not even the pretence of opposing a candidate to Mr. Goodhue, and Mr. Sedgwick is also rechosen by a surprising majority of votes in his district. These are premises from which much more accurate conclusions may be drawn than from the senseless bawlings of a miserable faction, and who are reduced to the last resource of making up in unheeded clamor, their total deficiency of influence and power. The real fact is that the new government is very rapidly acquiring a broad and solid foundation of popularity. It possesses in my opinion the confidence of the people in this State to a more eminent degree than any other government upon earth can boast of, and it appears to me to have already acquired a stability as astonishing as the revolution it has produced in the face of our affairs.

The effects of that revolution are already felt in a very high degree in this part of the country. Our commerce is increasing and extending; our manufactures multiplying very rapidly, our agriculture flourishing; industry has resumed the place which it had resigned for some time to idleness and luxury, and is seldom without employ. I am informed that the mechanics of almost every description in this town are at present more constantly busy than they have been at any period since the Revolution. The population of the town has increased from 14,000 to 18,000 inhabitants since the year 1784, and the property has augmented in a much greater proportion. Twelve hundred people are employed by one manufacture which has been only three or four years established; that of wool cards.

That of sail cloth, equally recent, gives bread to several hundred more. Paper hangings have become even an article of exportation from hence. Near four hundred tons of hemp I hear have been raised this season, within the state. This is a new article of cultivation, and even so late as the last year there were not more than thirty tons raised within the Commonwealth. It is found to be a very profitable article, and in all probability in the course of two or three years will cease to be imported altogether; and from a calculation which I have seen we might export it and easily undersell the Russians. There is a Colonel Wood in Charlestown who has raised more than three tons upon six acres of his land, and the produce of that small field will neat him 300 dollars. There is undoubtedly a connecting chain, the *commune vinculum*, between all the various employments of mankind as well as between the liberal arts and sciences. The farmer, the tradesman, the mechanic and the merchant, are all mutually so dependent upon one another for their prosperity, that I really know not whether most to pity the ignorance or to lament the absurdity of the partial politicians, who are constantly erecting an imaginary wall of separation between them.[1]

The health of the Governor has been better for these two months than for several years before. There is I think a probability that he will hold the chair of state for many years to come. It will not I presume be contested him; and indeed the bitterness of parties has been tempered very much by the favorable alteration in the public affairs. The public peace and public prosperity appear in this instance to have possessed a mutual acting and reacting power to establish and confirm each other. . . .

In the stagnation of our own politics the people who

[1] A reference to Thomas Jefferson was probably intended.

have a fondness for the subject turn their attention to those of Europe, which seems to be now as much as ever it could be *un repaire d'horreurs*. The war between Spain and England has been so long suspended in the balance, that we presume one of the scales must very soon preponderate. The last information we have has a greater appearance of hostility than any we have hitherto received. In France it appears to me the National Assembly in tearing the lace from the garb of government, will tear the coat itself into a thousand rags. That nation may for ought I know finally be free, but I am firmly persuaded it will not be until they have undergone another revolution. A nobility and a clergy, church and state levelled to the ground in one year's time; rights not inconsistent with those of man, established by a prescription uncontrovertible, if any prescription can be so; rights like these blown to the winds by the single breath of a triumphant democracy, are inauspicious omens for the erection of an equitable government of laws. By the politeness of the French consul[1] I have perused several volumes of their debates and projects for constitutions. There are some valuable papers among them; but it appears to me that the rabble that followed on the heels of Jack Cade could not have devised greater absurdities than many of their propositions; some of which have been adopted by the Assembly. I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

[1] Le Tombe.

"The felicity of the public should always be rejoiced in, whatever may be our private afflictions or misfortunes. But you have no reason whatever to complain. Your case is the lot of every youth of your profession. The world cannot be forced. Time must be taken to become known in any situation: but your sudden appearance in a city where you had not studied, renders it still more impossible that you should suddenly get in business." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, December 8, 1790. Ms.

LETTERS OF PUBLICOLA[1]

I[2]

MR. RUSSELL,

SIR, The late Revolution in France has opened an extensive field of speculation to the philosopher and to the politician. An event so astonishing and unexpected in its nature, and so im-

[1] Paine's *Rights of Man*, written in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), appeared in London early in 1791, with a dedication to George Washington. A copy reached the hands of John Beckley, clerk of the House of Representatives, and passing through Madison was read by Jefferson. From him it reached the printer, with a letter expressing gratification that it was to be reprinted, and something said against the political heresies prevalent in the United States. "I was thunderstruck," he wrote to Adams later, "with seeing it come out at the head of the pamphlet. I hoped, however, it would not attract notice." The explanation was somewhat lame, and naturally the replies to Paine noticed Jefferson as the sponsor of the pamphlet. The pamphlet appeared early in May, and the press at once began to print replies, a series in Fenno Jefferson believed to have been written by John Adams. See *Jefferson to Washington*, May 8, 1791. Another series, signed "Publicola," began to appear in the *Columbian Centinel* of Boston in June, attracting wide notice, and being generally copied in the journals of the other States. Eleven of these letters were printed, the first on June 8, and the last on July 27, and the subject as well as the treatment gave rise to suspicion that John Adams was the author.

"Nobody doubts here who is the author of Publicola, any more than of Davila," wrote Jefferson to Madison, June 28, 1791. Nor would he accept the disavowal of the Boston editor, that John Adams "has no more concern in the publication of the writings of Publicola than the author of the Rights of Man himself." If, commented Jefferson, "the equivoque here were not intended, the disavowal is not entirely credited, because not from Mr. Adams himself, and because the stile and sentiments raise so strong a presumption. Besides to produce any effect he must disavow Davila and the *Defence of the American Constitutions*. A host of writers have risen in favor of Paine, and prove that in this quarter at least the spirit of republicanism is sound." Such a suspicion, when openly expressed, as it was in the press, directed attention to the papers, which received greater notice than their merits would seem to call for. They were widely copied by journals throughout the United States, and called out many replies, but few arguments. In Boston "Brutus" answered in the *Columbian Centinel*, and "Agricola," "A Republican,"

[2] *Columbian Centinel*, June 8, 1791.

portant in its consequences, naturally arrested the peculiar attention of the whole civilized world. The friends of liberty and of man have seen with pleasure the temples of despotism levelled with the ground, and the Genius of Freedom rising suddenly in his collected and irresistible strength, and snapping in an instant all the cords with which, for centuries, he had been bound. Upon

"The Ploughman," and "The Watchman" in the *Independent Chronicle*. The plane on which the discussion was conducted may be measured by the charge against Publicola of favoring monarchy and aristocracy, which formed the principal burden of these replies.

Madison wrote to Jefferson, July 13, 1791: "Beckley . . . says . . . that Publicola is probably the manufacture of his son out of materials furnished by himself [John Adams], and that the publication is generally as obnoxious in New England as it appears to be in Pennsylvania. If young Adams be capable of giving the dress in which Publicola presents himself, it is very probable he may have been made the editor of his father's doctrines. I hardly think the printer would so directly disavow the fact if Mr. Adams was himself the writer. There is more of method also in the arguments, and much less of clumsiness and heaviness in the style, than characterize his writings. I mentioned to you some time ago an extract from a piece in the Poughkeepsie paper as a sensible comment on Mr. Adams's doctrines. The whole has since been republished here, and is evidently from a better pen than any of the Anti-publicolas I have seen. In Greenleaf's paper of to-day is a second letter from the same quarter, which confirms the character I have given of the author." *Writings of James Madison* (Hunt), VI. 56 *n*. An interchange of letters on the subject passed between John Adams and Jefferson, but could not entirely do away with a feeling on either side, that the publication marked a hostile divergence of political beliefs and a personal participation in furthering newspaper criticisms. Adams held Jefferson to be partly responsible for the publication of Paine's pamphlet, and Jefferson believed that the publication would have proved harmless had not Publicola raised such an outcry against it. See *Works of John Adams*, VIII. 504–511; *Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Ford), V. 328; *Writings of George Washington* (Ford), XII. 37 *n*. The letters were reissued in London: An/Answer/to/Paine's Rights of Man./By/John Adams, Esq./. . . London:/ Printed for John Stockdale,/1793. Also in Edinburgh, as "Observations on Paine's 'Rights of Man,'" 179–. Extracts were read by Sir Archibald Macdonald, the King's Attorney-General, in the trial of Thomas Paine in 1792.

Writing nearly two years later, his father said, "Poor Jay has gone through as fiery an ordeal as I did, when I was suspected of a blasphemous doubt of Tom Paine's infallibility, in consequence of Publicola's eloquence and Jefferson's rashness." *To John Quincy Adams*, August 25, 1795. Ms.

the downfall of the arbitrary system of government in France, there appears to have been but one sentiment, and that sentiment of exultation; but while the friends of humanity have rejoiced at the emancipation of so many millions of their fellow creatures, they have waited with anxious expectation to see upon what foundations they would attempt to establish their newly-acquired liberty. The proceedings of their Representative Assembly have been contemplated in very different points of view, by men of names equally illustrious, and of characters equally favourable to the cause of liberty. Among the publications which have appeared upon the subject, two pamphlets, founded upon very different principles, appear to have been received with the greatest avidity, and seem calculated to leave the deepest impression. The one written by Mr. Burke, which is one continued invective upon almost all the proceedings of the National Assembly since the Revolution, and which passes a severe and indiscriminating censure upon almost all their transactions: The other the production of Mr. Paine, containing a defence of the Assembly, and approving every thing they have done, with applause as undistinguishing as is the censure of Mr. Burke. We are told, that the copy from which an edition of this work was reprinted at Philadelphia, was furnished by the Secretary of State, and was accompanied by a letter, from which the following extract has been published in most of our newspapers. "I am extremely pleased to find that it is to be re-printed here, and that something is at length to be publicly said, against the *political heresies* which have sprung up among us. I have no doubt our citizens will *rally* a second time round the standard of *Common Sense*."

I confess, Sir, I am somewhat at a loss to determine, what this very respectable gentleman means by *political heresies*. Does he consider this pamphlet of Mr. Paine's as the canonical book of political scripture? As containing the true doctrine of popular infallibility, from which it would be heretical to depart in one single point? The expressions, indeed, imply more; they seem,

like the Arabian prophet, to call upon all true believers in the *Islam* of democracy, to draw their swords, and, in the fervour of their devotion, to compel all their countrymen to cry out, "There is but one Goddess of Liberty, and Common Sense is her prophet."

I have always understood, Sir, that the citizens of these States were possessed of a full and entire freedom of opinion upon all subjects, civil as well as religious; they have not yet established any infallible criterion of *orthodoxy*, either in church or state: their principles in theory, and their habits in practice, are equally averse to that slavery of the mind, which adopts, without examination, any sentiment that has the sanction of a venerable name. *Nullius in verba jurare magistri* is their favorite maxime; and the only political tenet which they would stigmatize with the name of heresy, would be that which should attempt to impose an opinion upon their understandings upon the single principle of authority.

I believe, also, Sir, that the citizens of America are not at present disposed to rally round the standard of any man. In the full possession and enjoyment of all the freedom, for which they have gone through so arduous a conflict, they will not, for the poor purpose of extinguishing a few supposed political heresies, return to the horrors of a civil contest, from which they could reap no possible benefit, and which would probably terminate in the loss of that liberty for which they have been so liberal of their treasure and of their blood.

If, however, Mr. Paine is to be adopted as the holy father of our political faith, and this pamphlet is to be considered as his Papal Bull of infallible virtue, let us at least examine what it contains. Before we determine to join the standard, let us inquire what are the articles of war to which our General requires our submission. It is the glorious characteristic of truth, at once to invite and bid defiance to investigation. If any opinions which have sprung up among us have really led us astray from the standard of *truth*, let us return to it, at the call of Mr. Paine, or of any other man who can show us our errors. But, Sir, if

upon examination, even this testament of orthodoxy shall be found to contain many spurious texts, false in their principles and delusive in their inferences, we may be permitted, notwithstanding our reverence for the author, at least to expunge the apocryphal doctrine, and to confine our faith to the genuine tenets of real political inspiration. It is my intention to submit to the public a few observations, which have occurred to me upon the perusal of this pamphlet, which has so clear and valid a title to the public attention. But I must here observe, that I wish to avoid every appearance of disrespect, either to the real parent of this production, or to the gentleman who has stood its sponsor in this country. Both these gentlemen are entitled to the gratitude of their countrymen; the latter still renders important services in a very dignified station. He is a friend to free inquiry upon every subject, and he will not be displeased to see the sentiments which he has made his own by a public adoption, canvassed with as much freedom as is consistent with the reverence due to his character.

II[1]

Sir, In that part of Mr. Paine's pamphlet which he has chosen to call the miscellaneous chapter, he observes that, "when a man in a long course attempts to steer his course by any thing else than some *polar truth or principle*, he is sure to be lost." I have sought for the polar principle to which his exertions were directed in this publication, and I must acknowledge I have sought in vain. His production is historical, political, miscellaneous, satirical, and panegyrical. It is an encomium upon the National Assembly of France. It is a commentary upon the rights of man, inferring questionable deductions from unquestionable principles. It is a severe satire upon Mr. Burke and his pamphlet upon the English Government, upon Kings, upon Nobility, and Aristocracy; it is a narrative of several occurrences, connected with the French Revolution, and it concludes with a kind of

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, June 11, 1791.

prophetical impulse, in the expectation of an "*European Congress to patronize the progress of free government, and promote the civilization of nations with each other.*" The object which he promised to himself, in this publication, is not so dubious as the principle on which he wrote. His intention appears evidently to be, to convince the people of Great Britain that they have neither Liberty nor a Constitution — that their only possible means to produce these blessings to themselves, is to "topple down headlong" their present government, and follow implicitly the example of the French. As to the right, he scruples not to say, "that which a whole nation chuses to do, it has a right to do." This proposition is a part of what Mr. Paine calls a system of principles in opposition to those of Mr. Burke, and it is laid down without any sort of qualification. It is not my intention to defend the principles of Mr. Burke; truth is the only object of my pursuit, and I shall without hesitation refuse my assent to every principle inconsistent with that, whether it proceeds from Mr. Burke, Mr. Paine, or even from the illustrious National Assembly of France. This principle, that a whole nation has a right to do whatever it pleases, cannot in any sense whatever be admitted as true. The eternal and immutable laws of justice and of morality are paramount to all human legislation. The violation of those laws is certainly within the power, but it is not among the rights of nations. The power of a nation is the collected power of all the individuals which compose it. The rights of a nation are in like manner the collected rights of its individuals; and it must *follow* from thence, that the powers of a nation are more extensive than its rights, in the very same proportion with those of individuals. It is somewhat remarkable that, in speaking of the exercise of the particular right of forming a Constitution, Mr. Paine himself denies to a nation that omnipotence which he had before so liberally bestowed. For this same nation, which has a right to do whatever it pleases, has no right to establish a Government in *hereditary succession*. It is of infinite consequence, that the distinction between *power* and *right* should be fully

acknowledged, and admitted as one of the fundamental principles of Legislators. A whole nation, such as France, England, or America, can act only by representation; and the acts of the representative body must be considered as the acts of the nation. We must go farther, and say, that the acts of the majority in the Representative Assembly are the acts of the whole body, and consequently of the whole nation. If, therefore, a majority thus constituted are bound by no law human or divine, and have no other rule but their sovereign will and pleasure to direct them, what possible security can any citizen of the nation have for the protection of his unalienable rights? The principles of liberty must still be the sport of arbitrary power, and the hideous form of despotism must lay aside the diadem and the scepter, only to assume the party-colored garments of democracy.

The system of principles upon which Mr. Paine advances this assertion is intended to prove, that the English nation have a right to destroy their present form of Government, and to erect another. I am not disposed to deny this right, nor is it at present necessary to examine whether Mr. Burke's opinions upon this subject are not directed rather against the expediency than the abstracted rights of such a measure. It may, however, not be improper to trace the origin of Mr. Paine's arguments against the principles maintained by Mr. Burke. Doctor Price has asserted, that by "the principles of the Revolution in 1688 the people of England had acquired the right, 1. To choose their own Governors. 2. To cashier them for misconduct; and, 3. To frame a Government for themselves." Mr. Burke endeavors to prove that the principles of the Revolution in 1688, so far from warranting any right of this kind, support a doctrine almost diametrically opposite. Mr. Paine, in reply, cuts the Gordian knot at once, declares the Parliament of 1688 to have been downright usurpers, censures them for having unwisely sent to Holland for a King, denies the existence of a British Constitution, and invites the people of England to overturn their present Government, and to erect another upon the broad basis of national sovereignty,

and government by representation. As Mr. Paine has departed altogether from the principles of the Revolution, and has torn up by the roots all reasoning from the British Constitution, by the denial of its existence, it becomes necessary to examine his works upon the grounds which he has chosen to assume. If we judge of the production from its apparent tendency, we may call it an address to the English nation, attempting to prove that they have a right to form a new Constitution, that it is expedient for them immediately to exercise that right, and that, in the formation of this Constitution, they can do no better than to imitate the model set before them by the French National Assembly. However immethodical his production is, I believe the whole of its argumentative part may be referred to these three points. If the subject were to affect only the British nation, we might leave them to reason and act for themselves; but, Sir, these are concerns equally important to all mankind; and the citizens of America are called upon from high authority to *rally* round the *standard* of this champion of Revolutions. I shall therefore now proceed to examine the reasons upon which he founds his opinions relative to each of these points.

The people of England have, in common with other nations, a natural and unalienable right to form a Constitution of Government, not because a whole nation has a right to do whatever it chooses to do, but because Government being instituted for the common security of the natural rights of every individual, it must be liable to alterations whenever it becomes incompetent for that purpose. The right of a people to legislate for succeeding generations derives all its authority from the consent of that posterity who are bound by their laws; and therefore the expressions of perpetuity used by the Parliament of 1688, contain no absurdity; and expressions of a similar nature may be found in all the Constitutions of the United States.

But, Sir, when this right is thus admitted in its fullest latitude, it must also be admitted, that it ought never to be exercised but in cases of extreme urgency: Every nation has a right as unques-

tionable to dissolve the bands of civil society, by which they are united, and to return to that state of individual imbecility in which man is supposed to have existed, previous to the formation of the social compact. The people of America have been compelled, by an unaccountable necessity, distressing in its operation, but glorious in its consequences, to exercise this right; and whenever a nation has no other alternative but the degradation of slavery, or the formidable conflict of a Revolution, the generous spirit of freedom will not hesitate a moment in the choice. Whether the people of France were, at the period of their Revolution, reduced to that unhappy situation, which rendered it absolutely necessary to overthrow their whole system to its foundation, is a question upon which the ablest patriots among themselves have differed, and upon which we are inadequate to decide. Whether the people of England are now in that calamitous predicament? is a question more proper for our discussion, and upon which I shall take the liberty to examine the reasoning of Mr. Paine.

III[1]

Sir, In examining the question, whether the English nation have a right, fundamentally to demolish their present form of government? it becomes necessary to inquire whether Mr. Paine's assertion that there is no such thing as an English Constitution, be really true? This question may, perhaps, in some measure affect the people of America. For if the government of Great Britain is an usurpation, it may be worthy of consideration how far we are bound by treaties, which do not reciprocally bind the inhabitants of that island.

"A Constitution," says Mr. Paine, "is not a thing in name only but in fact. It has not an ideal, but a real existence; and wherever it cannot be produced in a visible form, there is none." Mr. Paine should have gone farther, and told us, whether, like a deed, it must be written on paper or parchment, or whether it

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, June 15, 1791.

has a larger latitude, and may be engraved on stone, or carved in wood? From the tenor of his argument it should seem, that he had only the American Constitutions in his mind, for excepting them, I believe he would not find in all history, a government which will come within his definition; and of course, there never was a people that had a Constitution, previous to the year 1776. But the word with an idea affixed to it, had been in use, and commonly understood, for centuries before that period, and therefore Mr. Paine must, to suit his purpose, alter its acceptations, and in the warmth of his zeal for Revolutions, endeavor to bring about a revolution in language also. When all the most illustrious Whig writers in England have contended for the liberty of their country upon the principles of the English Constitution; when the glorious Congress of 1774 declared, that "the inhabitants of the English Colonies in North America were entitled to certain rights by the immutable laws of nature, *the principles of the English Constitution*, and the several charters or compacts," they knew very well what they meant, and were perfectly understood by all mankind. Mr. Paine says, that "a Constitution is to a Government, what the laws, made afterwards by that Government, are to a court of judicature." But when the American States, by their Constitutions, expressly adopted the whole body of the *common law*, so far as it was applicable to their respective situations, did they adopt nothing at all, because that law cannot be produced in a visible form? No, Sir, the Constitution of a country is not the paper or parchment upon which the compact is written, it is the system of fundamental laws, by which the people have consented to be governed, which is always supposed to be impressed upon the mind of every individual, and of which the written or printed copies are nothing more than the evidence.

In this sense, Sir, the British nation have a Constitution, which was for many years the admiration of the world; the people of America, with very good reason, have renounced some of its defects and infirmities. But in defence of some of its principles, they have fought and conquered. It is composed of a venerable

system of unwritten or customary laws, handed down from time immemorial, and sanctioned by the accumulated experience of ages; and of a body of statutes enacted by an authority lawfully competent to that purpose. Mr. Paine is certainly mistaken, when he considers the British government as having originated in the conquest of William of Normandy. This principle of being governed by an oral or traditionary law, prevailed in England eleven hundred years before that invasion. It has continued to this day, and has been adopted by all the American States. I hope they will never abolish a system so excellent, merely because it cannot be produced in a visible form. The Constitution of Great Britain is a Constitution of *principles*, not of *articles*, and however frequently it may have been violated by tyrants, monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical, the people have always found it expedient to restore the original foundation, while from time to time they have been successful in improving and ornamenting the building.

The people of England are bound therefore by a social compact now existing; and they have no right to demolish their Government, unless it be clearly incompetent for the purposes for which it was instituted. They have delegated their whole collective power to a Legislature, consisting of a King, Lords, and Commons, and they have included even the power of altering the Constitution itself. Should they abuse this power so that the nation itself should be oppressed, and their rights to life, liberty and property, instead of protection, should meet with tyranny, the people would certainly be entitled to appeal in the last resort to themselves, to resume the trust which has been so unworthily betrayed, and (not to do whatever they should choose, but) to form another Constitution, which should more permanently secure the natural rights of the whole community. The same may be said of the National Assembly of France, who, according to Mr. Paine's idea, are possessed of the whole collective power of the nation, and who seem, like him, to think they have a right to do whatever they choose. Mr. Paine says that "the authority

of the present Assembly is different to what the authority of future Assemblies will be." But if the present Assembly should decree that all future National Assemblies should possess the same power with themselves, it would certainly be binding as an article of the Constitution. Mr. Paine, indeed, will not acknowledge this, and it is the second right which he denies his nation, which at the same time has a right to do every thing. Mr. Paine's ideas upon this subject appear to have been formed by a partial adoption of the principle upon which Rousseau founds the social compact. But neither the principle of Rousseau, nor that of Mr. Paine, is true. Rousseau contends that the social compact is formed by a personal association of individuals, which must be unanimously assented to, and which cannot possibly be made by a representative body. I shall not at present spend my time in showing that this is neither practicable nor even metaphysically true. I shall only observe, that its operation would annihilate in an instant, all the power of the National Assembly, and turn the whole body of the American Constitutions, the pride of man, the glory of the human understanding, into a mass of tyrannical and unfounded usurpations. Mr. Paine does not go quite so far, but we must examine whether his arguments are not equally wide from the truth. "A Government," says he, "on the principles on which constitutional Governments arising out of society are established, cannot have the right of altering itself. Why not? Because if it had, it would be arbitrary." But this reason is not sufficient. A nation in forming a social compact may delegate the whole of their collective powers to ordinary legislatures, in perpetual succession, and reserve only the right of refusing the abuse of those powers; and every other question relative to the reservation of powers to the nation, must be only a question of expediency. The same power which the present National Assembly possess in France, is, by the English Constitution, constantly vested in the King and Parliament of Great Britain; and the people in both kingdoms have the same right to resist and punish the abuse of that power.

Surely, Sir, the people of the United States have a Constitution, although they have given the power of making alterations to those by whom it is administered, in conjunction with the State Legislatures. Surely, the people of Massachusetts have a Constitution, though it provides for certain alterations by the ordinary Legislatures, and though, since it was formed, such alterations have accordingly been made. The Constitutions of several of the United States are expressly made alterable in every part by their ordinary Legislatures. I think there is not one of them but admits of alterations without recurring to "the nation in its original character." Yet Mr. Paine will surely acknowledge, that the American Constitutions arose out of the people, and not over them. His principle, therefore, "that a Constitutional Government cannot have the right of altering itself," is not true. In forming their Constitution, a nation may reserve to themselves such powers as they may think proper. They may reserve only the unalienable right of resistance against tyranny. The people of England have reserved only this right. The French National Assembly have been in session more than two years to make laws nominally paramount to their future Legislatures. I shall hazard some observations upon this subject, when I attempt to follow Mr. Paine through his comparison between the French and English Constitutions. But as the English have delegated all their power, I contend they have no right in their original character to change their form of Government, unless it has become incompetent for the purposes for which all Governments are instituted. I am aware of the question which will occur here. Who is to judge of this incompetency? and I am aware of the triumphant manner in which it may be asked. But a triumph is not my object, and in the pursuit of truth I shall venture in my next number to consider this subject.

IV[1]

Sir, I have assumed for a principle, that the English nation, having delegated all their collective power, have no right in their

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, June 18, 1791.

original character to change their form of Government, unless it has become absolutely inadequate to the purposes for which it was instituted. The people themselves must, from the necessity of the case, be the judges of this fact; but if, in forming this judgment, and acting in pursuance of it, they proceed from passion, and not from principle; if they dissolve their compact, from an idea that "they have a right to do whatever they choose," and break the bands of society, in the forms of despotism, "because such is their pleasure," they may indeed go through the operation by the plenitude of their irresistible power; but the nation will meet with ample punishment in their own misery, and the leaders who delude them, in the detestation of their own posterity. It is not by adopting the malignity of a political satyrist, by converting the sallies of wit into the maxims of truth or justice, or by magnifying trivial imperfections into capital crimes, that a nation will be justified in resorting to its original strength, to contend against its delegated power. It is not now a mechanical horror against the name of a king, or of aristocracy, nor a physical antipathy to the sound of an extravagant title, or to the sight of an innocent riband that can authorise a people to lay violent hands upon the Constitution, which protects their rights, and guards their liberties. They must feel an actual deprivation of their equal rights, and see an actual impossibility for their restoration in any other manner, before they can have a right to lay their hands on their swords, and appeal to Heaven. These are not the principles of slavery; they are the tenets of the only genuine liberty, which consists in a mean equally distant from the despotism of an individual, as of a million. They are sanctioned by our own uniform example, and will, I trust, never be departed from by the most enlightened, and most virtuous people on the globe. For sixteen years the people of America endured a continual succession of every indignity, which the pride of dominion, the insolence of power, and the rapacity of avarice, could inflict upon them, before they could resolve to renounce an authority three thousand miles distant from them; and even then, they were

so far from thinking they had a right to do whatever they chose, that by the very act which renounced their connection with Great Britain they exposed to the world their own sufferings, and the various acts of tyranny which had compelled them "to acquiesce in the necessity which denounced the separation," and "appealed to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions." No, Sir, the venerable character who drew up this declaration never could believe that the rights of a nation have no other limits than its powers. Since the Revolution, the people of the United States have again been compelled to form a national Government, and in its formation proceeded in the same spirit. The confederation was found totally incompetent for the purposes for which it was instituted; not from abuse of the delegated powers, in those by whom it was administered, but because scarcely any powers at all had been given. The inefficiency of that system had long been fully demonstrated, and had reduced us to extreme distress. The States, united but in name, were upon the verge of general bankruptcy. Their credit, sunk to the lowest ebb, was upon the point of expiring, and their exhausted treasury gave perpetually the lie to their public faith, so often and so solemnly pledged. The forcible ties of a common interest, directed to one great object during the war, were greatly loosened by the accomplishment of that object, and the seeds of mutual hostility were sown by the partial commercial regulations of the respective States. The revenue laws which had been enacted in several of the States were not able to support their credit, and yet were so unequal in their operation, that numerous bodies of men, in more than one of the States, appeared in open rebellion against the mildest governments that ever were instituted. Instead of the glorious reward which the people had expected for their virtuous exertions, internal discord, and infamy abroad, presented themselves in dreary perspective before them. At this critical period, when the system to be annihilated was an empty name, and there was only a Government to be formed, the national Constitution was presented to the people of America "in

their original character"; and even there its existence was to depend upon the assent of nine States, that is, two-thirds of the people. Very fortunately it has at length been freely adopted by all the members of the Union; but the extreme difficulty which impeded the progress of its adoption, and the various amendments, which, in many of the States, were in a manner made the condition of their assent, exhibit the fullest evidence, what a more than Herculean task it is to unite the opinions of a free people, upon any system of government whatever.

Under the sanction of such authority, I venture to assert that the people of England have no right to destroy their government, unless in its operation the rights of the people are really oppressed, and unless they have attempted in vain every constitutional mode of obtaining redress. These principles ought to operate with peculiar force upon the people of England, because, in the uncertain and hazardous event of a revolution, they have more to lose and less to gain, than any other European nation, and because whatever they may acquire, must, in all probability, be purchased at the expense of a civil war. When provision is made for the alteration of a constitution, otherwise than by the common legislative power, it may be done comparatively without difficulty or danger; but where this power is already delegated, with the other powers of legislation, the people cannot use it themselves, except in their original, individual unrepresented character, and they cannot acquire the right to act in that capacity, until the power which they have thus conveyed in trust, has been abdicated by the extreme abuses of its administration.

When Mr. Paine invited the people of England to destroy their present Government and form another Constitution, he should have given them sober reasoning and not flippant witticisms. He should have explained to them the nature of the grievances by which they are oppressed, and demonstrated the impossibility of reforming the Government in its present organization. He should have pointed out to them some possible method for them to act in their original character, without a total dissolution of

civil society among them; he should have proved what great advantages they would reap as a nation from such a revolution, without disguising the great dangers and formidable difficulties with which it must be attended.

The principal and most dangerous abuses in the English Government arise less from the defects inherent in the Constitution, than from the state of society; the universal venality and corruption which pervade all classes of men in that kingdom, and which a change of government could not reform. I shall consider this subject more largely hereafter; but at present, with respect to the expediency of a revolution in England, I must inquire how the nation can be brought to act in their original character? Mr. Paine, perhaps, from the delicacy of his situation, has said nothing openly upon this very important point. Yet, in two different parts of his work, he seems obscurely to hint two methods for the accomplishment of this object. When he compares the situation of the citizens of London to that of the inhabitants of Paris just before the taking of the Bastille, it seems as if it was with an intention to recommend a similar insurrection for the purpose of dispersing the Parliament, and expelling the King, which would leave the nation without any government at all, and compel them at all events to act in their original character. When he advises "Revolutions by accommodation," he must probably mean, that a convention should be called by act of Parliament to regenerate their Constitution. I can not imagine any other method of answering his purpose. Mr. Paine seems to think it as easy for a nation to change its government, as for a man to change his coat; but I confess, both the modes of proceeding which he suggests appear to me to be liable to great objections.

V[1]

"There are in all European countries," says Mr. Paine, "a large class of people of that description, which in England are called the *mob*." It was by the people of this description that

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, June 22, 1791.

the Bastille in Paris was destroyed. In London there is no Bastille to demolish; but there is a government to overturn; and there is a King and Parliament, who must either be put to flight, or compelled to call a convention for the purpose of forming a Constitution. "In the commencement of a Revolution those men are rather the followers of the *camp* than of the *standard* of liberty, and have yet to be instructed how to reverence it." As these men were made instrumental to the accomplishment of the Revolution in France, Mr. Paine appears to intimate that they may be employed for a similar purpose in England. I am as little disposed as Mr. Paine can be, to reproach either the whole nation to which they belong, or that unhappy class of human beings themselves, for the devastation which they commit. They cannot be considered as free agents, and therefore are neither the subjects of praise or blame; but the friend of humanity will be extremely cautious how he ventures to put in action a tremendous power, which is competent only to the purposes of destruction, and totally incapable either to create or to preserve. This class of men, of whom it is the happiness of Americans scarcely to be able to form an idea, can be brought to act in concert upon no other principles than those of a frantic enthusiasm and ungovernable fury; their profound ignorance and deplorable credulity make them proper tools for any man who can inflame their passions, or alarm their superstition; and as they have nothing to lose by the total dissolution of civil society, their rage may be easily directed against any victim which may be pointed out to them. They are altogether incapable of forming a rational judgment either upon the principles or the motives of their own conduct; and whether the object for which they are made to contend, be good or bad, the brutal arm of power is all the assistance they can afford for its accomplishment. To set in motion this inert mass, the eccentric vivacity of a madman is infinitely better calculated than the sober coolness of phlegmatic reason. They need only to be provoked and irritated, and they never can in any other manner be called into action. In the year 1780, they assembled at London to the num-

ber of 60,000, under the direction of Lord GEORGE GORDON, and carrying fire and slaughter before them, were upon the point of giving the whole city of London to one undistinguished devastation and destruction: and this, because the Parliament had mitigated the severity of a sanguinary and tyrannical law of persecution against the Roman Catholics. Should these people be taught that they have a right to do every thing, and that the titles of Kings and Nobles, and the wealth of Bishops, are all usurpations and robberies committed upon them, I believe it would not be difficult to rouse their passions, and to prepare them for every work of ruin and destruction. But, Sir, when they are once put in motion, they soon get beyond all restraint and control. The rights of man, to life, liberty, and property, oppose but a feeble barrier to them; the beauteous face of nature, and the elegant refinements of art, the hoary head of wisdom, and the enchanting smile of beauty, are all equally liable to become obnoxious to them; and as all their power consists in destruction, whatever meets with their displeasure must be devoted to ruin. Could any thing but an imperious, over-ruling necessity justify any man, or body of men, for using a weapon like this to operate a Revolution in Government? Such indeed was the situation of the French National Assembly, when they directed the electric fluid of this popular frenzy against the ancient fabric of their monarchy. They justly thought that no price could purchase too dearly the fall of arbitrary power in an individual, but, perhaps, even *they* were not aware of all the consequences which might follow from committing the existence of the kingdom to the custody of a lawless and desperate rabble.

But do the people of England labor under such intolerable oppression, as would authorise any of their patriots to employ an arm like this for their relief? Suppose sixty thousand men should again assemble round Westminster-hall, and with clubs and firebrands for their sole arguments, should compel the Parliament to call a convention to make a Constitution, what would be the probable consequences? Is it clear that so large a majority of the

people of England have lost all their attachment to their Constitution, as to insure an acquiescence in the measure throughout the kingdom? Is it certain that one quarter part of the people would obey an act extorted by such violence as that? Would not all the friends of the present Government rally round the standard of the Constitution, and would not their duty compel them to defend it with their lives and fortunes? If it should soon appear that they were decidedly the strongest party, would not the insurrection be extinguished in the blood of its leaders? If the parties should prove to be nearly equal, would not the nation be involved in all the horrors of a long and bloody civil war? In whatever point of view, the effects of this scheme are contemplated, they present nothing but prospects at which every friend of mankind must shudder; nor can I possibly believe that Mr. Paine, who is certainly a benevolent man, would deliberately recommend this method, though, in his ardent zeal for the honor of the French nation, and the propagation of their doctrine, he has incautiously suggested it.

But he recommends Revolutions by accommodation; which, applied to England, must mean that a convention be called by a free and deliberate act of Parliament, to alter the Constitution; but this plan appears to be equally dangerous with the other, and more impracticable; while, by a singular fatality, an act of this kind would be the completest evidence of its own inutility, it would be equally dangerous, because by a formal act of competent authority it would expose the kingdom to all the evils of anarchy and of war, which in the other case would result from a popular convulsion. It would be less practicable, because it is contrary to nature, that any body of men should venture to perform the most transcendent act of power of which human beings are capable, for the single purpose of divesting themselves of all power whatever. It would prove its own inutility, because no man will presume that they ought to take such a measure, unless the wishes of a clear and decided majority of the people are favorable to an alteration of the Government. If they are disposed to act in conformity

with the desires of the people, the very same power which would authorise them to dissolve the Government, would likewise justify them in making any alterations which would meet with the wishes of the nation, and would render a recurrence to them "in their original character," perfectly unnecessary.

Whatever Mr. Paine's opinion may be with respect to the existence of an English Constitution, it is certain that every member of the British Parliament who gives his vote in the making of a new law, or the alteration of an old one, must suppose that he acts by virtue of a Constitutional right vested in him; but the same right which authorises him to give his suffrage in the most trifling object of legislation, has vested in the Parliament, of which he is a member, the whole power of the British nation, and he cannot possibly deny their right without utterly destroying his own. The right of the individual depends altogether upon the right of the corporation, and his right to vote for the regulation of a turnpike, or the toll of a bridge, is the same with theirs to make every necessary and convenient alteration in the Constitution of the kingdom itself. While they are thus convinced of their right to exercise these great powers, would it not be the summit of extravagance and folly in them, nay, would it not be the most flagrant breach of the trust reposed in them, of which they could possibly be guilty, to abdicate an authority lawfully committed to them, to declare themselves altogether incompetent to a wise and prudent use of a Constitutional power, and to commit the peace, the welfare, the very existence of the nation, to the uncertain and hazardous event of a Revolution?

If, however, we can suppose that the Parliament should finally accede to the idea, that they are mere tyrants without the shadow of a right to the authority which they have hitherto exercised, the only act which they could agree to, would be a vote to dissolve themselves, and leave the vessel of the state without either a pilot or a rudder. For the very act of calling a convention would be an usurpation, and, from the importance of its consequences, an usurpation of the most daring nature: it would be assuming the

right to dissolve the ties of society, and at the same instant acknowledging that this assumed right was without any sort of foundation. In short, this plan of calling a convention to alter the Constitution, by act of Parliament, appears to me, in whatever light it be considered, to involve an absurdity.

But, as there is unquestionably somewhere in England, a combination of the right and of the power to alter the Constitution of the country, and as that Constitution is indubitably liable to be improved, we may be permitted to inquire, whether a blind imitation of the French National Assembly would probably promote the happiness of the people, the only objects for which all Governments were instituted, or which can authorise their alteration.

VI [1]

Sir, Mr. Paine affirms that the French nation have a Constitution, and that the English have none. I have already offered a few observations upon the latter part of this assertion; but, as a preliminary to some remarks which I propose to make upon his comparison, I must premise, that directly the reverse of his opinion upon this subject is the truth, and that in reality the English nation have a Constitution, and the French as yet have none. The National Assembly have indeed been constantly sitting these two years, to form a Constitution; and at the ceremony of the Federation about eleven months since, they swore themselves and their King to the observance of a Constitution *to be made*. But as they are still possessed of the whole power of the nation, they may repeal any article upon which they have hitherto agreed, by virtue of the same authority, which enabled them to pass the decree, and, therefore, according to Mr. Paine's own ideas, the French cannot be said to have a Constitution, until the National Assembly shall please to dissolve themselves, and to put their whole system into full operation.

I have endeavored to show that it is not absolutely essential

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, June 29, 1791.

to the existence of a Constitution, that it should be producible "in a visible form." The period of time when the foundations of the present English Government were laid by the association of the people in "their original character" cannot, indeed, be ascertained. Many of the laws which are in use to this day in Great Britain, and from thence have been adopted by the American Republics, may be traced back to the remotest period of antiquity, and the origin even of the institution of Juries, an institution so congenial to the genuine spirit of freedom, is lost in the obscurity of the fabulous ages. Many of the fundamental principles of the English Constitution are known to have existed long before the invention of printing, and even before the inhabitants of Britain were acquainted with the use of letters, and it would therefore be an absurdity to require that the original articles should be produced "in a visible form." But "*ex nihilo, nihil fit,*" the very existence of these principles proves the formation of a social compact previous to that existence, and the spirit of liberty, which is their distinguishing characteristic, affords internal evidence, that they did not originate in the merciless despotism of a conqueror, but in the free and unrestrained consent of a manly and generous people. It will not be said that an original compact was never formed, because it is not recorded in the page of history; as well might it be pretended that the pyramids of Egypt arose self-created from the earth, because the time of their erection, and the names of their builders have been consigned to that oblivion in which all human labors are destined to be overwhelmed.

William of Normandy, to whom Mr. Paine always refers the origin of the English Government, was the conqueror only of Harold. He obtained the crown of England by popular election, upon the express condition that he would govern the nation according to her ancient laws and customs; he took the same oath at his coronation which had been taken by his predecessors, and by his last will, after bequeathing the province of Normandy to his eldest son Robert, he expressly acknowledged that he did not possess the kingdom of England as an inheritance, and only recommended his

son William as his successor. It would be altogether unnecessary at this time to discuss the question whether the crown of England was originally hereditary or elective, but the facts which I have here stated, and which are warranted by all the most ancient and most authentic English historians, fully demonstrate that the English Government did not originate in the Norman conquest. "If the succession runs in the line of the conquest, *the nation* runs in the line of being conquered, and it ought to rescue itself from this reproach," says Mr. Paine. "The victory obtained at Hastings not being a victory over *the nation collectively*, but only over the person of Harold, the only right that the conqueror could pretend to acquire thereby, was the right to possess the crown of England, not *to alter the nature of the Government*," says Judge Blackstone (1 Comm. 199). Upon a question of fact relative to the English Constitution, Blackstone is, I believe, as good an authority as Mr. Paine, but I wish not to rest the question upon any authority whatever: I venture to affirm, that any man who will coolly and impartially examine the subject, and appeal to the original sources of information, will acknowledge that those who derive the origin of the English Government from William the Conqueror, can do it upon no other principle than that of supporting a system.

It is not, however, necessary upon the present occasion to revive a question which has been discussed among the English with all the acrimony of faction. Mr. Paine has chosen the ground which was not found tenable by the slavish supporters of passive obedience and the divine right of Kings. They took it originally, because it was necessary to them for the support of their system, and they were driven from it by the friends and supporters of equal liberty. Mr. Paine found it necessary to support a doctrine of a very different nature; and adopting the maxim, that it is lawful to learn, even from our enemies, he has freely borrowed from them the practice of accommodating the facts of history to his political purposes.

Be that, however, as it may, the Parliament of Great Britain,

from time to time, have enacted certain laws, which, from their superior importance, have been denominated Constitutional; the acquiescence of the people, to whom most of these laws have been extremely satisfactory, gives them at least as good a sanction as the Constitution of France has obtained. The National Assembly were not originally chosen to form a Constitution. They were called together as States General, under the authority of another Constitution, such as it was. They assumed the power to dissolve the old Constitution, and to form another, and the acquiescence of the people has confirmed their assumption. At all events, therefore, their Constitution stands upon no better ground than the acts of the British Parliament.

If, then, the Parliament of Great Britain have a right to declare what shall be the supreme law of the land, they will be able to produce a system of Constitutional law, even according to Mr. Paine's wish, "in a visible form." This system is contained in a number of statutes, enacted not at one time, or by one body of men, but at divers times, according to the occasional convenience of the people, and by a competent authority. These statutes contain the principles upon which the English Government is founded, and are therefore proper objects of comparison with the Constitution which is to be the supreme law of the land in France. The comparisons which Mr. Paine has drawn are not partially favorable to his native country. We shall enquire whether they are perfectly consistent with truth.

VII [1]

Sir, By the English Constitution, the whole collective power of the nation is delegated, and the Constitution itself is alterable by the same authority which is competent to the common purposes of legislation.

The French are to have a Constitution, every part of which will be nominally beyond the control of their common legislatures,

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, July 2, 1791.

and which will be unalterable in all parts, except by the nation in its "original character." At least Mr. Paine has undertaken to answer for them that it will be so: although I have not seen any such article in the Constitution, and though perhaps it has not yet been decreed, I am willing to take Mr. Paine's word for the fact, and to consider the subject as if it were already determined.

I have made some observations upon Mr. Paine's arguments, as they respect the right of a nation to delegate all their power. As a question of expediency, it may perhaps be more difficult to determine, which of these two schemes contains the least evil. Both of them are supported by the example of several among the American States, and can therefore boast the sanction of authorities equally respectable.

The fundamental principle upon which society is formed appears to be, in order that the power of the whole may be rendered subservient to the interests of the whole. The problem to solve is, in what manner the power shall be distributed, so as most effectually to answer that purpose? Considering the extreme difficulty with which a whole nation can be brought to act in their original character, it should seem, that wisdom must dictate to them the necessity of delegating their whole power in such a manner as that it may be rendered beneficial to the nation, because whatever power is retained by the people, cannot be exercised for their advantage any more than to their injury. The question therefore occurs, why a nation should not delegate all its powers? Mr. Paine has bestowed very little consideration upon this subject; I find, that although he gives his own opinion very freely, he offers only two reasons to support it. One, because "such a Government would be arbitrary:" the other, because "there is a paradox in the idea of vitiated bodies reforming themselves." In the sense in which the word arbitrary is here used, the first argument attacks the foundation of civil society itself; for whenever a number of individuals associate together, and form themselves into a body politic, called a nation, the possession and the use of the whole power (which is not, however, arbitrary power) is the

very object of their association. This power must exist somewhere, and I cannot see the reason why it should not exist for the benefit of the people. But whenever a Constitution is made unalterable by the common legislative authority, the nation do in reality abdicate all the powers which they are said to retain, and declare that very important powers shall at all events be useless to them, from an apprehension that they might possibly be abused to their injury. It is as if a man should bind himself never to wear a sword, lest he should turn it against his own breast. The only reason why the whole power of a nation should not be delegated, must arise from the danger of its being abused: and a melancholy experience has always shown, that when the whole power has been thus delegated to one man, or to one body of men, it has invariably been grossly abused, and the sword of the people has been turned into a dagger against them. From the pressure of those evils, many nations have been induced expressly to forbid their governments the use of certain powers, without considering that the impotence of their supreme authority would certainly be very prejudicial to them, and perhaps as fatal as the abuse of power. This experiment has repeatedly been made; it has frequently failed: and I believe, that after several more experiments shall fully demonstrate the ill policies of thus annihilating the power of the nation, it will be clearly seen, that all the powers of the people ought to be delegated for their benefit, and that their true interest consists in the distribution of those powers in such a manner as shall, in its own operation, guard against the abuses which alone are dangerous to the people.

The Constitution of the United States appears to me to unite all the advantages, both of the French and of the English, while it has avoided the evils of both. By that Constitution, the people have delegated the power of alteration, by vesting it in the Congress, together with the State Legislatures; while at the same time it has provided for alterations by the people themselves in their original character, whenever it shall evidently appear to be the wish of the people to make them. This article appears to be

all the works of man are liable, it is possible that your Legislature may become incompetent to make such alterations as may be necessary. But when the people are constantly represented in the Legislature, I believe they will never find it necessary to recur to their original character, in order to make any alterations, which they may deem expedient, unless they deny the power of making them to their Legislature.

"But," says Mr. Paine, "there is a paradox in the idea of vitiated bodies reforming themselves." This must depend altogether upon the coincidence of the part vitiated with the part which is to apply the remedy; for unless the defect itself necessarily precludes the possibility of applying the power of reformation, the paradox ceases, and no more involves an absurdity, than that a physician should use his own prescriptions to cure himself of a disorder.

The very act by which septennial Parliaments were established in England, affords sufficient proof that the power of altering the constitution itself ought to be delegated, and even exercised by the Government upon certain critical occasions. That act was made at a time when the kingdom was threatened with an immediate invasion, when a rebellion had but just been quelled, and when the peace and safety of the nation depended upon the use of this power by the Parliament; such was the opinion of the people at that time, and the act met with general approbation, from the general conviction of its necessity. Such occasions may happen in the history of every free people, and it is therefore proper that the power should be delegated. Upon the principles of equal liberty, upon the principles of public happiness, and therefore of political expedience, I think it may be fairly concluded, that Mr. Paine's preference of the French to the English constitution, so far as it relates to this article, is not founded in truth.[1]

[1] "Publicola has been reprinted in all the most respectable papers to the southward. His animadverters, not *answerers*, swarm like *Bees*, and, like *Drone Bees* they only *buz*.

"☞As it has been asserted in one of the *Philadelphia* newspapers, that the papers under the signature of *Publicola*, were written by the VICE PRESIDENT, in

VIII[1]

Mr. Paine has undertaken to compare the English and French constitutions, upon the article of representation. He has of course admired the latter, and censured the former. This is unquestionably the most defective part of the English constitution, but even the most essential of these defects appear to flow from the natural order of things which a revolution in government could not reform; from a state of society, when every principle of religion or of morality has lost its influence, and where the only shadow of virtue, public or private, remaining among a great majority of the people, is founded upon an imaginary point of honor, the relict of the exploded age of chivalry. Such at present is the situation of the national character both in England and in France. To attempt to govern a nation like this, under the form of a democracy, to pretend to establish over such beings a government which according to Rousseau is calculated only for a republic of Gods, and which requires the continual exercise of virtues beyond the reach of human infirmity, even in its best estate; it may possibly be among the dreams of Mr. Paine, but it is what even the National Assembly have not ventured to do; their system will avoid some of the defects, which the decays of time and the mutability of human affairs have introduced into that of the English, but I do not hesitate to affirm that they have departed much further from the essential principles of popular representation, and that however their attachment to republican principles may have been celebrated, the *theory* of their National Assembly is more remote from the spirit of democracy than the *practice* of the English House of Commons.

The ground upon which Mr. Paine acknowledges his approbation of the French constitution are that they have limited the number of their representatives, in proportion to the numbers of citizens

justice to that gentleman, and the publick, they are assured that he has no more concern in the publication, than the author of '*Rights of Man*' himself." *Columbian Centinel*, July 2, 1791.

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, July 9, 1791.

who pay a tax of 60 sous per annum, and the duration of the assembly to two years. It is certainly essential to the principles of representation that there should be a frequent recurrence to the constituent body for election, because it is the only security of the constituent for the fidelity of the agent. It is the only practical responsibility by which the representative is bound. The term of seven years for which the House of Commons is elected, weakens the responsibility too much, and is a proper object of constitutional reform; but by the French constitutions, there is no responsibility at all; no connexion between the representative and his constituent: The *people* have not even once in seven years an opportunity to dismiss a servant who may have displeased them, or to re-elect another who may have given them satisfaction. There is upon the French system less dependence of the representative upon his constituent than in England, and the mode of election renders the biennial return of the choice almost wholly nugatory. It is not true that the French constitution allows the privilege of voting for a representative in the National Assembly to every man who pays a tax of 60 sous per annum. Mr. Paine has mistaken the fact, for it is impossible that he should have intentionally misrepresented it; though it differs almost as much from his principles as from those of a real popular representation. It is as follows. Every Frenchman born or naturalized, of 23 years of age, who pays a tax equal to three days' labor, is not a hired servant, nor a bankrupt, nor the son of a deceased bankrupt (a very unjust qualification), shall be allowed to vote for — what? A representative to the National Assembly? By no means. Yet one would think the exclusions sufficiently severe, for a government founded upon the equal rights of all men; but he shall vote for members of a certain assembly; this assembly is allowed to choose, not the representatives of the nation, but another body of electors, who are to be the immediate constituents of the legislative assembly. Thus the supreme legislative council of the nation, are to be the representatives of a representative body, whose constituents are the representatives of the people; and at

every stage of this complicated representation, the free citizens of the state, are excluded from their natural rights, by additional qualifications in point of property. Yet this is the system which we are told is to abolish aristocracy.

In the formation of the legislative body, the National Assembly contemplated three different objects of representation, the *persons* of the people, their *property*, and the *territory* which they inhabit: They have endeavored to establish a proportion compounded from the three, but in the refinement of their metaphysics and mathematics, they have lost the primary object itself, and the people are not represented.

But setting aside their calculations, what is the *essential* principle upon which the representation of the people in the legislature is to be grounded? It is, that a Freeman shall never be bound by any law unless he has consented to it. It is impossible, except in a very small state, that every individual should personally give his voice, and therefore this practice of voting by representation was invented. In its most perfect state it cannot fully answer the purpose of its institution, because every representative is actuated by several powerful motives, which could not operate upon his constituents. It is an *artificial democracy*, which never can perform completely the functions of the natural democracy; but imperfect as it always must be, no other contrivance has been hitherto devised, which could so effectually give their operation to the opinions of the people. In the theory of representation it is a *personal* trust, by which a thousand individuals may authorise one man to express their sentiments upon every law which may be enacted for the benefit of the whole people: and therefore in theory every representative ought to be elected by the unanimous vote of his constituents; for how can a man be said to have been consulted in the formation of a law, when the agent authorised to express his opinion was not the man of his choice? Every pecuniary qualification imposed either on the electors or as a condition of elegibility, is an additional restriction upon the natural democracy, and weakens the original purpose of the institution. Thus far the

people of America have submitted to necessity in the constitution of their popular assemblies. But when the principle is abandoned so completely, that the individual citizen, even in the pretended exercise of his infinitesimal fragment of sovereignty cannot possibly form an opinion, who will be the elector of the representative that is to be the depositary of his opinion in the acts of legislation? The assembly thus formed may indeed assume the name of a democracy, but it will no more be entitled to the appellation than an ill drawn miniature portrait, to that of the animated original which it may profess to represent.

It is obvious that the reason why the National Assembly have chosen to refine their representation through so many strainers was to avoid the violence, the tumults, the riots which render almost all the populous towns in England a scene of war and blood at the period of Parliamentary elections. Time alone will inform us what the success of their system will be, even in this particular. Their elections, however, must be extremely expensive, and must open a thousand avenues to every sort of intrigue and venality. The National Assembly as a body, will be in theory an aristocracy without responsibility. This aristocracy thus constituted are to possess the supreme power of the nation, limited only by a printed constitution subject to their own construction and explanation.

Happy, thrice happy the people of America! whose gentleness of manners and habits of virtue are still sufficient to reconcile the enjoyment of their natural rights, with the peace and tranquillity of their country; whose principles of religious liberty did not result from an indiscriminate contempt of all religion whatever, and whose equal representation in their legislative councils was founded upon an equality really existing among them, and not upon the metaphysical speculations of fanciful politicians, vainly contending against the unalterable course of events, and the established order of nature.

IX[1]

From the existence of game laws and of monopolies in England, Mr. Paine infers the wisdom of the National Assembly, who have decreed, that there shall be none in France. I shall not defend the game laws or the monopolies allowed in England; Mr. Paine's comparisons are made with the professed intention of showing the superiority of the French Constitution, and he has therefore always chosen his own ground of comparison. He might have pursued a system more consistent with truth and candor, but it would not have answered his purpose so effectually. The true drift of Mr. Paine's argument in this instance is this, *The English Parliament have enacted game laws that operate unequally. They have allowed more monopolies than are advantageous to the people; therefore the Legislature of a nation ought not to have the power to make any laws at all, relative either to game, or to monopolies.* This is Mr. Paine's principle, and it is the real ground upon which he prefers the French Constitution, not merely to that of England, but to those of every State in the American union. He infers that the English Constitution is bad, because under that Constitution certain bad laws have been enacted, and are not yet repealed. And he concludes that the French Constitution is excellent, because the universal freedom of the chase, and the universal freedom of trade are placed beyond the control of their Legislature. But the preservation of game is an object of public concern, and the Legislature of every country ought to have the power of making game laws for the benefit of the public. Whether the English Parliament have exerted unwisely this power which has been delegated to them or not, is a question altogether foreign to the purpose; we know that bad laws exist in every country under Heaven, but it is strange reasoning, to infer from thence, that there ought not to exist in the nation a power to make good ones. All the Legislatures in the United States have the power to enact game laws and to allow monopolies. They all of them exercise this power. We have

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, July 13, 1791.

game laws and monopolies in this Commonwealth, and yet no man complains that they are destructive to his liberty. If the French Constitution has placed the regulation of those objects beyond the reach of their ordinary legislative authority, they will soon find by their experiences of inconveniencies that the goodness of a Constitution does not depend upon the impotence of the Legislature.

In examining the next article it is utterly impossible for me to do justice to the wit of Mr. Paine. The charge which he has so often repeated against Mr. Burke's book cannot be made against this production. You find here nothing of the "spouting rank of high-toned exclamation:" You do not even find the delicate sallies of elegant comedy. His own words must be quoted: "The French Constitution says, that to preserve the National representation from being corrupt, no member of the National Assembly shall be an officer of the government, a placeman or a pensioner. What will Mr. Burke place against this? I will whisper his answer: *Loaves and Fishes.*" And then he proceeds to show that the answer which he whispers for Mr. Burke is very ridiculous. There is, it must be acknowledged, something pleasant in this mode of managing an argument; but it is rather unfortunate that Mr. Paine should complain as an abuse of the English government, that it is "themselves accountable to themselves," so near to a passage which is most assuredly "himself undertaking to answer himself." Every person will acknowledge that the answer of *Loaves* and *Fishes* is very absurd; it is even too absurd for Mr. Burke in his original character; and the only circumstance that renders it perfectly accountable is, that it comes from Mr. Burke by his representative, who certainly never had from him any authority to misrepresent him so palpably.

Mr. Paine has seldom thought proper to answer even the few arguments contained in the book which is so obnoxious to him: Easy as it might have been to refute Mr. Burke's reasoning, he probably thought it easier to refute his own: He has hunted for epigrams where he ought to have sought arguments: In the

pursuit of those epigrams he has been sometimes not unsuccessful in exposing the absurdity of his own reasoning, but a less passionate or more generous political polemic, would not have chosen to place his own inconsistencies to the account of his antagonist.

Mr. Paine has not however grounded his preference to the French Constitution upon truth, in this instance any more than in the other. The principle of excluding placemen, pensioners and executive officers from the national representation is acknowledged by the laws under the English Constitution as well as in that of France. The only possible advantage which the French can pretend to, is, that they have been more successful in its application. Mr. Paine might have said that it was not sufficiently extended by the English laws, and that it was by the French; and his opinion would have had its weight; but this would not answer his purpose; the French Constitution must at all events have a triumph; and a system so odious as the English government, was not entitled to the benefits of common truth and justice. There are however several acts of Parliament; expressly excluding a great variety of placemen, pensioners and officers dependent upon the executive authority, from holding seats in the House of Commons. With respect to pensioners their principle is more equitable than the total exclusion of the French. Every person holding a pension at the pleasure of the King, or for a term of years is excluded, because such a man may be too liable to be under the influence of the executive power; but if a man has received a pension for life, as a reward for services rendered his country, a pension which carries no dependence, and which can have no effect upon the legislative conduct of the person entitled to it, neither the English nor the Americans think that former services are a regular disqualification for the future; nor are they disposed to deprive any man of an invaluable privilege, merely because they have paid him for hazarding his life perhaps, or his fortune in their service.

But, says Mr. Paine, by the English Constitution "those who vote the supplies are the same persons who receive the supplies

when voted, and are to account for the expenditure of those supplies to those who voted them; it is themselves accountable to themselves." This to be sure is very ingenious, but it is not in any sense true. The persons who vote the supplies are the House of Commons, the representatives of the nation: To them the King's ministers (and principally the Chancellor of the Exchequer) are accountable for the expenditure of the monies voted. The ministers may indeed be at the same time members of the House of Commons, and the system is perhaps defective in allowing a few individuals to be members of the body to whom they are accountable. It may be inconvenient, but is not at all absurd, and is purposely authorised by the English Constitution, because they consider the advantages as more than a balance for its inconveniences. The minister of the supreme executive office, states to the representatives of the nation, the sums necessary to defray the annual expenses of the kingdom. These representatives vote the assessment of such sums as they think necessary, and make the appropriations. The ministers then become accountable for the expenditures according to the previous appropriations, to that body of which they are indeed individual members, but of which they do not compose an hundredth part. Upon what principle then are we told that it is themselves accountable to themselves? They have indeed in France taken great pains to secure the independence of the legislative upon the executive authority; but they have not been equally cautious on the other side. Their executive is left totally at the mercy of the legislature, and must infallibly soon fall a sacrifice to their ambition.

The discussion of this subject would lead me far beyond my present intention. I have shown that the Constitution of England has adopted the principle of excluding citizens dependent upon the executive power, from the House of Commons; the French Constitution has done no more; and if they have carried the application of the principle further, that circumstance does not warrant the decided preference which Mr. Paine has so liberally bestowed:

Since it is only a difference of opinion upon the expediency of particular exclusions.

X[1]

The next article upon which Mr. Paine has pronounced the superiority of the French Constitution, is upon the subject of making war and peace. The right, he says, is placed where the expense is, that is, in the nation: Whereas "in England, the right is said to reside in a *metaphor*, shown at the Tower for six pence or a shilling a piece." He answers himself again in this passage, and shows the folly of placing such a formidable right in a metaphor; but in this instance as in the former, there is much wit and no truth; and I must take the liberty to affirm in contradiction to Mr. Paine, that the French Constitution has not, nor could not place the right of declaring war, where the expense must fall; and that the English Constitution has not placed this right in a metaphor.

The expense of supporting wars must in all countries be defrayed by the nation, and every individual must bear his proportion of the burthen. In free countries that proportion must always be determined by the representatives of the people; but the right of deciding when it may be expedient to engage in a war, cannot possibly be retained by the people of a populous and extensive territory, it must be a delegated power; and the French Constitution has vested it in the National Assembly. By the English Constitution it is vested in the supreme executive officer; but to guard against the abuse of this formidable power, it has given to the representatives of the people, the exclusive right of providing for the support of the war, and of withholding the supplies, "the sinews of war," if it should ever be declared contrary to the sense of the people themselves. Mr. Paine supposes a perplexity, which is warranted neither by theory nor by the experience of history. "If the one rashly declares war," says he, "as a matter of right; and the other peremptorily withholds the supplies as a matter of

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, July 20, 1791.

right, the remedy becomes as bad or worse than the disease." But every war in England must be the war of the people: The King is in reality no more than the organ of the nation, and must be more than an idiot to declare a war, upon which he must depend altogether upon them for its support, without being certain of that support. Imaginary conclusions drawn by reasoning against the inevitable order of things, are unworthy of a politician, and should be left as a feeble resource for the satirist. To have given his objection even an appearance of plausibility, Mr. Paine should have mentioned an instance, when this clashing of the rights of the King and of the Commons has ever been productive of the ill effects which his fancy has sagaciously drawn from them.

Indeed Mr. Paine himself, upon further reflection, acknowledges the futility of his objection, and says "that in the manner the English nation is represented, it signifies not where this right resides, whether in the Crown or in the Parliament." But I apprehend, if the representation in England were as perfect as human wisdom could devise, their present system with respect to peace and war, would comprise all the advantages of the French system, and at the same time be free from many inconveniences, to which that must be liable.

It must be clear to every one that the French have not, as Mr. Paine pretends, united the *right* and the *expense:* The impracticability of such an union, must be equally evident; and the only question which can establish a fair ground of comparison, between the two constitutions is, *Whether it is expedient to delegate to the legislative, or whether to the executive authority, the right of declaring war.*

As I am not yet a convert to Mr. Paine's opinion that a nation has a right to do what it pleases, I must be allowed to say that they have a right to make war upon their neighbors, without provocation. The people by their representatives must judge, when the provocation is sufficient to dissolve them from all the obligations of morality and humanity, by which nations are bound to preserve the blessings of peace. But when they have determined that the

great law of self-preservation, to which all other laws must give way, or that the laws which they have enacted in consequence of the primitive contract which united all their power for the benefit of every individual, compel them to appeal for justice to the God of battles, then, the declaration of war, the formal act, by which they announce to the world their intention to employ the arm of power in their own defence, seems to be the proper attribute of the executive power. The difference, therefore, between the English and French constitutions, considered in this light, can involve only a question of propriety, and as such the English appears to me to deserve the preference.

If this idea should be considered as heretical, I must beg leave to call to my assistance the authority of Rousseau, a name still more respectable than that of Mr. Paine, because death has given the ultimate sanction to his reputation. "The act of declaring war," says he in his Social Compact, "and that of making peace, have been considered as acts of sovereignty, which is not the case; for either of those acts is not a law, but only an application of the law; a particular act which determines the operation of the law, as will be clearly perceived when the idea annexed to the word *law* shall be ascertained." The spirit of the English constitution is perfectly agreeable to this idea.

But let us consider this subject a little further. Whenever a difference arises between two nations which may terminate in a war, it is proper and customary, that previous negotiations should be held, in order to use every possible means of settling amicably the dispute. These negotiations, the appointment of the agents by whom they are to be conducted, and the communication of the proposals for accommodation, which are respectively offered by either of the parties, are all appropriated to the executive department. When the restoration of peace becomes expedient in the opinion of the people, agents must again be appointed, and proposals of pacification must again be made. It is obvious to every man, that in the management of these concerns the utmost secrecy and despatch are frequently of essential necessity to the welfare

of the people; but what secrecy can ever be expected, when every instruction to an ambassador, every article of a proposed treaty, and every circumstance of information from the minister, in the progress of his operations, must be known to twelve hundred men assembled in the capital of the republic; what probability of despatch, when all these things must be debated in this Assembly of 1200 men; where every thing must in the necessary order of events be opposed, by interested individuals and irritated factions, who may protract the discussion for months or years at their pleasure.

By the Constitution of the United States, it is true, the right of declaring war is vested in the Congress, that is, in the legislative power. But it is in the point of form that it agrees with the Constitution of France; it has wisely placed the management of all negotiations and treaties, and the appointment of all agents and ministers in the executive department; and it has so thoroughly adopted in this instance the *principles* of the English Constitution, that although it has given the Congress the right of declaring war, which is merely a difference of form, it has vested in the President, with the advice of the Senate as his executive council, the right of making peace, which is implied in that of forming treaties. This is not the first instance in which Mr. Paine's principles attack those of the constitutions of his country. Highly as we may revere, however, the principles which we are under every obligation to support, we may without irreverence acknowledge that they partake of the human imperfection from which they originated, and if Mr. Paine's principles in opposition to them, are in any instance founded upon eternal truth, we may indulge the hope, that every necessary improvement will be adopted in a peaceable and amicable manner by the general consent of the people. But if the principles of Mr. Paine, or those of the French National Assembly, would lead us by a vain and delusive pretence of an impracticable union, between the right of declaring, and the expense of supporting a war, to the sacrifice of principles founded in immutable truth, if they could

persuade us, by establishing in the legislative body all negotiations with foreign nations relative to war and peace, to open a thousand avenues for base intrigue, for furious faction, for foreign bribery, and domestic treason, let us remain immoveably fixed at the banners of our constitutional freedom, and not desert the impregnable fortress of our liberties, for the unsubstantial fabric of visionary politicians.[1]

XI[2]

The papers under the signature of PUBLICOLA have called forth a torrent of abuse, not upon their real author nor upon the sentiments they express, but upon a supposed author, and supposed sentiments.

With respect to the author, not one of the conjectures that have appeared in the public prints has been well grounded. The Vice-President neither wrote nor corrected them; he did not give his sanction to an individual sentiment contained in them, nor did they "go to the press under the assumed patronage of his son."

With respect to the sentiments, to those who have read the pieces with attention, it is needless to say, that they are simply an examination of certain principles and arguments contained

[1] "It would seem as if Mr. Fenno and Mr. Russell had entered into a league to insert the detestable heresies of Publicola, without publishing a single essay to counteract their pernicious tendency. But it is to be hoped that the *ex parte* perusal which Publicola obtains in this way will not procure many proselytes either to *monarchy* or *aristocracy*. Publicola seems to have some talents, but perverted as they are, they are worse than thrown away. Like Burke he has attempted to raise a structure upon a rotten foundation; and his tottering edifice, like that of Burke, would soon have fallen into ruins of itself. Its fate, however, has been accelerated by the numerous assailants it has had to encounter. It is a circumstance highly honorable to the political character of our country, that an *host* of enlightened writers have arisen, in every part of the United States, to oppose the abominable heresies of Publicola." [Brown's] *Federal Gazette*, Philadelphia, July, 1791. It was this journal that intimated a communication between John Adams and Burke, and asserted that Publicola appeared in consequence of that communication.

[2] *Columbian Centinel*, July 27, 1791.

in a late pamphlet of Mr. Paine's, which are supposed to be directly opposite to principles acknowledged by the constitutions of our country. And the author challenges all the writers who have appeared in support of Mr. Paine's infallibility, to produce a single passage to these publications which has the most distant tendency to recommend either a monarchy or an aristocracy to the citizens of these States.

The writer never had the intention to defend the corruptions of the English Constitution; nor even its principles in theory, except such as were adopted in our own. Mr. Paine has drawn a comparison between certain parts of the English and French constitutions, in which are contained principles of government, that are not acknowledged by our own constitutions. So far as the principles of the English Constitution have been adopted by the Americans, I have defended them, and I am firmly convinced, that we cannot renounce them, without renouncing at the same time the happy governments with which we are favored. The question of superiority between the French and English constitutions, has no connection with a question relative to monarchy. If this be true, it must apply equally to the admirers of the French Constitution, and Mr. Paine himself is chargeable with having supported a monarchical institution. It is well known that by the French Constitution, a standing army of near 300,000 men is established, and placed beyond the annihilating arm of legislature. Is it possible that Mr. Paine should admire this Constitution, without being a friend to standing armies? The argument is the same, and the assertion might be made, with just as much truth, as that PUBLICOLA is an advocate for monarchy or for aristocracy.

When Mr. Paine says that a whole nation (by which it is admitted that he means a majority of the nation) have a right to do what it chooses, and when he says that before the formation of civil society every man has a natural right to judge in his own cause, it appears to me that he resolves all *right* into *power;* it is this opinion which I have combated, because it appears to me to be of the most pernicious tendency, and if it is not really

contained in the pamphlet, I confess myself greatly mistaken. But the *enlightened* writers, who have defended the principles of Mr. Paine, differ so essentially in the ground they have taken, that the one or the other would certainly have been charged with propagating detestable heresies, had not the end sanctified the means, and the object of defending Mr. Paine, reconciled the inconsistency of their reasonings. One writer supports the principle through thick and thin; and tells you that the *will* of the contracting parties is the only circumstance that makes treaties obligatory. Another tells you that I have grossly misrepresented Mr. Paine, and that the national omnipotence which he establishes relates only to the internal concerns of the community. He agrees, however, that the will of the majority must be taken for the will of the whole nation, and that with respect to the formation of a government, a majority have a right to do what they please. So that it is no longer the "rights of men," but the rights of the majority which alone are unalienable.

Upon the question whether a constitution government can be made alterable otherwise than by the people in their original character, I have defended the Constitutions of the United States against the principle of Mr. Paine, though in the republication of the paper in several of the southern papers, the passage which supports my opinion by the authority of the Constitution, is omitted.

Upon the article of representation, I have contended that the French representation is no representation of the people at all. Is there a man in the United States who would recommend it as a model to us? I have contended that our representation of the people is infinitely superior both to the French and the English; and this is said to be an abominable heresy.

Upon the subject of monopolies, of game laws, and of exclusions from the legislature, I have defended the *principles* adopted by our own constitutions, and not the abuses of the English Government. Upon that of war and peace I have done the same, and wherein Mr. Paine's observations have appeared to be founded upon any other

foundation than truth, I have endeavored to show their fallacy. But a defence of monarchy or aristocracy was no more in my intention, than the defence of the Salic Law of descents was to that of Mr. Paine.

I shall now conclude these papers with requesting that those only who read them would judge upon their principles; and I am well persuaded, that the candour of the public will not take misrepresentation for reason, nor invective for argument.[1]

TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

Boston, February 1st, 1792.

My dear Brother, — I have been for more than three weeks indebted to you for two very agreeable letters, which Mr. Otis brought from you. They would not have remained so long unanswered but for a variety of circumstances which have concurred to engross all my time during that period. It is possible that you may have observed in the *Centinel* about a month since, that a Committee of 21 inhabitants of this Town was chosen in town-meeting,[2] to report to the town what measures it might be proper to take in order to reform the present state of the police of the town; and you may have noticed that my name was

[1] "Publicola in attempting to build up his baneful system of Monarchy and Aristocracy, has in a most wanton manner, attempted to raise his superstructure, on the ruins both of the Reputation and Liberties of the People. But however this writer may plead in behalf of a King and Nobility, yet the People of those countries, it is not doubted, will feel their weight and importance, and e'er long exercise their natural rights, to obtain their influence in the scale of government.

"I believe it may with truth be said, that sentiments so derogatory to the dignity of the people have not been propagated in this country, since the days of Hutchinson; and from the illiberality of the observations, and their horrid consequences, I dare not harbor a thought, that any American, much more a Ruler of America, is so lost to every sentiment of propriety and decency, as to be the author of them." "A Republican," in the *Independent Chronicle*, July 21, 1791.

[2] *Columbian Centinel*, January 14, 1792. The meeting was held on the 13th.

among those of several of the most respectable characters in this town upon that Committee; if you read the *Centinels* in course as they arrive, you must have seen that this Committee reported a certain plan, which after being debated in town meeting for three days was finally rejected by the votes of 700 men against more than 500 who were in favor of its adoption.[1] If you have noticed all these circumstances, it is probable you may feel some degree of curiosity to know something further upon the subject: You will perhaps wish to be informed what it is, that has thus agitated the whole town of Boston these five or six weeks, how it happened that I was placed upon this same Committee, and why the report was rejected. I will tell you, at the risque of fatiguing you with a tedious narration, which you may throw aside if it should become intolerable.

The Government of this town, in its corporate capacity, like that of all the other towns in this Commonwealth, is a pure democracy; all the affairs of the town are transacted by the inhabitants in town meeting assembled, or by committees appointed by them; excepting certain powers which are vested in the Select-men, and which are very immaterial. The by-laws of the corporation are supposed to be enacted by the whole body of the people, and to be put in force by trials before Justices of the Peace. In consequence of this system, the fact is, that no by-laws are enforced at all, and the inhabitants are subjected to various inconveniences, for the want of some internal regulation. Several attempts have been heretofore made to introduce a reformation, and to induce the inhabitants to request for a city charter. Those attempts have always been ineffectual, and the inconveniences have continued. About six weeks since, a town meeting was called, where after a

[1] At the meeting on January 26. The vote was 701 against 517.

debate upon the subject, in which the objects to be reformed were fully laid open and explained, the Committee, which I have already mentioned, were chosen. It was a subject upon which I felt altogether uninterested, having been so short a time an inhabitant of the town, and suffering personally very little from the inconveniences which had occasioned the complaints from whence that town-meeting resulted. I happened however quite accidentally to be present at the meeting and was nominated by Dr. Jarvis,[1] to be a member of the Committee, and was accordingly chosen. He was indeed the last man in this town from whom I should have expected such a nomination, and I cannot very readily account for his motives. Dr. Welsh asked him what his object was; and he answered, "that this country was under great obligations to my father, and he thought it very proper that some notice should be taken of his son; that he observed I generally attended the town-meetings, and appeared to interest myself in the affairs of the town; that I was a sensible young man" (excuse the vanity of the relation) "and he wished to hear my sentiments upon this subject." I mention these circumstances because it will, I believe, be somewhat surprising to your father, as it was to myself, that the first public notice ever shown me by the town of Boston should proceed from the nomination of Dr. Jarvis. I may now proceed to the transaction of the business itself. The Committee met several times, and after discussing the subject amply and deliberating with great coolness and harmony agreed upon the plan which was proposed, and which you have perhaps read. The agreement was unanimous, with one exception, which was Mr. B. Austin, commonly called Honestus; he set his face against the reform from the

[1] Dr. Charles Jarvis (1748–1807).

beginning and did not agree to one article of the report. All the rest, though many of them differing widely as the poles, in most of their political sentiments, were fully agreed upon this point. When the report was debated in town-meeting Austin opposed it with the utmost degree of vehemence and absurdity. "It was to destroy the liberties of the people; it was a resignation of the *sovereignty* of the town; it was a link in the chain of aristocratic influence; it was intended in its operation to throw the whole burden of taxation upon the poor." In short his speeches were such a farrago of nonsense and folly that it was hardly possible to imagine they could have any effect at all. On the other hand, Sullivan and Jarvis and Otis with several other gentlemen argued the whole subject over and over with more popular eloquence than I ever saw exhibited upon any other occasion; yet upon the final question, the result was as I have stated, seven hundred men, who looked as if they had been collected from all the jails on the continent, with Ben. Austin like another Jack Cade at their head, outvoted by their numbers all the combined weight and influence of wealth and abilities and of integrity, of the whole town. From the whole event I have derived some instruction, and above all a confirmation of my abhorrence and contempt of simple democracy as a Government; but I took no part in the debate. It was indeed a very good opportunity, that was offered me, of opening a political career, especially as I had been put upon the Committee; but for a variety of reasons I chose at least to postpone to some future period, my appearance as a speaker in town meeting; the principal of which was a want of confidence in myself, which operated most forcibly upon me. I hope, however, the time will come, when I shall not be so much oppressed by my diffidence.

But the sequel of the story is no less curious than the rest. The day after the question was decided, Russell the printer[1] demanded of Austin, in the public street, satisfaction, for a personal insult he had received from him at the town-meeting; and upon Austin's refusing to give satisfaction, Russell treated him with every possible indignity, and gave him a severe corporeal bruising: upon which Austin spread abroad that Russell was the mere instrument of *aristocratic* revenge, and that he did not act from resentment for his own injury, but at the instigation of a few rich men, who were enraged at seeing the success with which he had advocated the cause of *the people*. And such was the obsequious servility of his rabble, that in consequence of this suggestion, several hundreds of them assembled the same evening; threatened to pull down Russell's printing office, and the houses of the *aristocrats* who wished to enslave the people, and actually paraded the streets with clubs, and with violent menaces for two or three hours; however they did no real mischief, and the matter seems now to have blown over pretty generally; though the partizans on both sides are still warm and ready to quarrel. I have from the beginning taken the part of a spectator rather than that of an actor in the scene, and I think the whole affair has given me some additional knowledge of human nature.

The present is quite a busy time in our political world; there are several other subjects upon which I could write you other letters as long and as tedious as this; but I must reserve some of my information for your father, to whom I am ashamed not to have written this long time. I intend soon to give him some account of another occurrence, which has made not a little political agitation in our atmosphere.

[1] Benjamin Russell, publisher of the *Columbian Centinel*.

I have not much more to say to you respecting myself. Our Court of Common Pleas have sat again since I wrote you; I argued one more cause, and was successful. I gain my causes, but I get no business: that is at as low an ebb as ever, but I am tolerably habituated to the lot, and say, with Ancient Pistol, "si fortuna me tormenta, il sperare me contenta."

The petition from the North Parish in Braintree is hitherto successful. The Committee of the General Court before whom I mentioned to you our having argued the point, reported in favour of the petitioners: the bill for incorporating the town of *Quincy*, has past the Senate and is now before the House of Representatives. Hichborn[1] has been indefatigable in his opposition to the business in every stage of it, but has not yet been able to defeat us. The question will not be finally decided till next week.

Mr. Cranch has been in town about a fortnight upon this affair, and attending the Court of Common Pleas. He has recovered to all appearance from his sickness, though he does not look so healthy, or in such spirits, as he was wont. Our other friends are all well.

Your brother.

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, February 4th, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

A variety of circumstances have occurred since you left this part of the country, which have combined to change in some measure the state of our parties in the State. You have probably heard of them from other quarters, and ought to have heard of them before this from me. I will

[1] Benjamin Hichborn, representative from Dorchester.

endeavor to retrieve as far as possible my former deficiency, and to give an account of the present situation of affairs here, so far as I can collect my information from public report.

In the month of October a town meeting was held in this town, wherein it was voted to petition our General Court for a repeal of the law prohibiting theatrical exhibitions. The vote was carried by a large majority; but the party opposed to the measure was numerous, and a counter-petition, signed by more than three hundred persons was presented to the legislature at the same time with the petition for the repeal. Upon this subject the Lieutenant Governor, and Dr. Jarvis were upon the opposite sides of the question, and debated the point so *warmly* together that a *coolness* it is said has ensued between them since that time. This however is a matter of small moment in comparison with another event which has produced a more extraordinary variance.

When the vacancy upon the bench of our Supreme Judicial Court, occasioned by the death of Judge Sargeant,[1] was to be filled up, the Governor was sollicited by the friends of Mr. Dawes (by his father particularly, and perhaps by himself) to fix upon him for the office; and whether from motives of personal friendship, or from pecuniary obligations, or from an idea of the family influence of the man and a wish to secure it in his own favor, or whatever his reasons were, he did, without consulting an individual member of the Council, or any of the Judges of the Supreme Court, or even his confidential favorite and adviser, Sullivan, nominate Mr. Dawes. The nomination met with universal disapprobation. The bench, the bar, and the people at large in every part of the state were dissatisfied. The opinion

[1] Nathaniel Peaslee Sargeant (1731–1791).

that Dawes was not a proper man for the office was universal, and the importance of the office itself greatly increased the discontent which the nomination occasioned. That discontent however would have evaporated in a momentary censure of the levity and caprice of the Governor, as it has upon many former occasions, had not the arrangement interfered with the views of private interest, and with the designs of faction. From the first moment of the nomination, it has met with an avowed and determined opposition from Sullivan and from Judge Dana, who appear even to have joined in a sort of combination to obstruct the progress of the appointment. Sullivan has clamored in all his private conversations, has scribbled anonymously in the newspapers, has personally urged Mr. Dawes to decline the appointment, and wrote a long letter to the Governor, persuading him to withdraw the nomination; and he has so decidedly and perseveringly pursued this line of conduct, that an actual rupture has taken place between him and the Governor. Nay, I have some reason to conjecture that he has serious thoughts of advancing as a candidate for the chair himself in opposition to the present possessor. The pretext of his violent opposition to Dawes is an ardent zeal for the dignity of the State. And as an enemy of the national government his principle is certainly well founded. The Supreme Court of the State has lost much of the veneration of the people by a former appointment.[1] It is indeed surprising how that diminution of confidence has in so short a period of time since the last change pervaded every part of the Commonwealth; and the mortification of the party is greatly aggravated by the respectability of the national courts, and the growing attachment of the people to them. In addition to this it is said that Sullivan expected that the

[1] Of Nathan Cushing.

salaries of our judges would, before the vacancy should be filled up, be raised to £500, in which case he would have stood ready to take the place himself, and in the opinion of many people his disappointment in this particular has exceedingly sharpened his zeal for the *dignity of the State*. Of Judge Dana I feel myself always obliged in duty, and from personal attachment, to speak with respect and reverence; but in writing to you upon the state of our politics I must not conceal the opinions which are held with respect to the motives of his conduct. He has been equally open and decided against Mr. Dawes with Sullivan, and equally active in endeavoring to prevent the appointment. His patriotism and public spirit are allowed, and admitted as being much more forcible principles to actuate him than Sullivan; but the peculiar earnestness and even virulence with which he pursues Dawes at present, has given occasion to a suggestion that the prospect of failing to obtain an augmentation of his salary, contributed not a little to give additional vigor to his patriotic ardor. His eyes as well as those of Sullivan are supposed to be fixed upon the chair of State, and possibly he may anticipate an increase of his own popularity by maintaining a contest against an unpopular measure. The views of the two men are so widely different, and indeed so irreconcileable together, that they cannot long act in concert. But as the object of keeping Dawes from the bench is a favorite point with both, they have apparently formed a coalition for this particular purpose. They have both endeavored to persuade Dawes to decline; both used all their influence with the members of the council, that the nomination might be disapprobated, but in vain. To decline an appointment which he had sollicited, and obtained notwithstanding the opposition of Sullivan's influence with the Governor, would in Dawes's

opinion betray a want of spirit on his part, and after getting so good hold of the public loaf, he has no disposition to relinquish it. The Council, though most of them were dissatisfied, yet would not by passing a negative upon the Governor's choice, cast a stigma upon the character of a man whom they considered as *only unequal* to the office; and as to the Governor himself, in addition to all the motives which originally operated to determine his election, he is now induced from obstinacy and resentment to support the man whom he brought forward. Dawes is therefore appointed and has accepted the appointment. Mr. Dana however does not yet give the point. At the same time when Mr. Dawes was nominated, Dana was appointed to the vacant seat of Chief Justice; but he has not yet accepted, and it is said he intends actually to decline accepting it, and that, for the purpose of bringing in question the legality of Dawes's appointment. Our law says the Supreme Court shall be held by one Chief Justice and four other justices, and the inference is that as there were four other justices at the time whem Mr. Dana was nominated, the Governor had no right to propose a fifth until the Chief Justice had declared his acceptance, and taken the oath of office. Thus the affair now rests, and the result of all the plots and counterplots will probably appear in the course of three or four weeks, when the next session of the Supreme Court is to be held in this town.[1]

I wrote to my brother by the last post an account of an-

[1] "The judges of the Supreme Court, it is said, intend to oust Dawes by Dana's refusing or delaying to accept the office of Chief Justice. They say there was no vacancy when Dawes was nominated and appointed, and that all have agreed to refuse an appeal to the chair if offered them; by which means it is probable the Governor may be brought to say he had no authority to nominate D[awes], and our little friend be compelled to recede." *Gore to King*, February 1, 1792. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 406.

other transaction, which has occasioned much altercation in this town, and has also contributed to widen the difference in the party. Sullivan and Jarvis strenuously supported the system that was proposed, and it was opposed violently by Ben. Austin and by the influence of the Lieutenant Governor, though he did not publicly appear against it. The parties were very severe upon each other in the public town meetings, and are said to be still at variance, but whether from a sense of necessity for the mutual support of their own importance, and of their hostile spirit to the national government, they will again come together, or whether they will continue to separate until a complete disunion and opposition of pursuit shall ensue, must be left to the determination of time. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, December 8, 1792.

DEAR SIR:

Our electors met in this town on Wednesday last, and their votes for President and Vice President were unanimous. This was generally expected here, and the event is supposed to have been nearly if not wholly the same in all the New England states. New York it is imagined was unanimous for Mr. Clinton as V[ice] P[resident]. Their electors are chosen by their legislature, where their Governor has a bare majority, determined to support upon all occasions his party and his politics. From the other states you will probably hear before us. And upon the whole I presume the election will be favorable.[1]

The Governor has at length prevailed in routing the play-

[1] Washington received a unanimous vote of 132. The vote for Vice-President was thus divided: Adams, 77; Clinton, 50; Jefferson, 4; Burr, 1.

ers. On Wednesday the Attorney General [1] received orders from him and the Council to prosecute the violators of the laws immediately. He applied for a warrant to a Justice of the Peace returnable before two Justices of the quorum. The sheriff arrested one of the actors [2] behind the scenes in the course of the play on Wednesday evening, and informed the company that unless they dispersed immediately he should arrest all the other performers for the evening. The company immediately assumed the form of a deliberative assembly, and debated the question, whether they should retire or direct the players to proceed and bid defiance to the sheriff. They concluded that obedience to the law was the safest party and withdrew, not without many imprecations against the Governor and the law upon which they were interrupted. The next morning the examination upon the warrant was to take place, and the justices [3] met at Faneuil Hall, their own offices being too small and the Court House occupied by the district court. The Hall was about half full of spectators who took every opportunity to express their disapprobation of the proceedings. An objection was taken by Mr. Otis, counsel for the defendant, to the warrant, as not being founded upon *oath*, but only upon an official complaint of the Attorney General. Whether Sullivan committed the blunder from ignorance or from inattention, or from design, is doubtful, but the by-standers enjoyed a hearty laugh at his expense. He has affected a kind of neutrality upon this occasion and has avoided giving offence to either party by being active on either side. It was supposed by many persons that he proceeded thus irregularly on purpose to give the players an opportunity to escape, and he himself wishes to have it understood that he acts only in consequence of express directions from the Governor and

[1] James Sullivan. [2] Harper. [3] Joseph Greenleaf and Samuel Barrett.

Council. The objection however prevailed, and the player who had been arrested was discharged amid the loud and very improper plaudits of the audience. Justice Barrett with proper spirit reproved their conduct in the Hall, upon which they were quiet; but as soon as they got out of the Hall they closed the business with three huzzas. The players in the meantime had taken the alarm and most of them are gone; so that I hope we shall have no more altercations upon this subject.[1] . . .

[1] Sullivan gave a history of the law in his communication to the *Chronicle:* "In the year 1742, there was an interval of peace, and the country flourished. The town of Boston was nearly as numerous as it now is; but the Legislature of that day thought it proper to pass the act under consideration. It was made a temporary act, because the Crown of England, which had a negative upon all our laws at that time, would never have consented to a permanent prohibition of that kind. The act was several times revived before the present constitution; and in the year 1785, since the existence of the Commonwealth, it was revived and continued in force, until the year 1797. In the year 1791, the town of Boston, in town-meeting, instructed their Representatives to procure a repeal of it, if it could be effected: And a large number of inhabitants subscribed and presented a petition against the repeal. The whole subject was committed to a committee, who reported against the repeal. Upon the question, whether the report should be accepted, two of the Boston members exerted their abilities to procure a repeal; but they could not obtain a vote in favor of it. . . . Perhaps the majority would not have been so great, if a particular member of foreign education, had not affronted the House, by ridiculing the habits and manners of the people." When some players came from the southward, and, in August, 1792, opened a theatre in a newly constructed building in Board Alley, the Grand Jury took no action, nor did any individual suggest a civil suit, but the Governor [Hancock] mentioned the circumstance in his speech to the Legislature, and the General Court informed him they expected the law to be supported. No Justice could be found to convict on the complaint of the Attorney-General, and the players withdrew and closed their theatre. *Independent Chronicle*, December 13, 1792.

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, December 16, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received last evening your favor of the 5th instant. The votes of the electors in Connecticut and Rhode Island were unanimous it seems, as well as in this State. I have not heard any further, but we presume there was the same unanimity in New Hampshire, which if it be the case will I think do credit to New England. We expect nothing but the voice of faction from New York, and we know not enough what the disposition of the Southern States was.

I gave you in my last some account of the Governor's having at length succeeded in overthrowing the players; but some other circumstances have taken place which at that time I had not heard. Two days after the arrest of the player which I mentioned in my last, those who still remained had announced another play, but upon being advised by their own friends to desist, they postponed the performance. At night however a mob of about two hundred people collected together and went up to the Governor's house to ask his leave to pull down the play-house. Upon their approach towards his house, the family were thrown into great consternation, upon the idea that they were of the other party, and were coming to insult him. He received, however, a deputation from them and, as it is said, authorised them to proceed upon their riotous design. They accordingly went and began to destroy the fences round the house, but were soon dispersed by a Justice of the Peace of the other party, who went among them with the riot act in his pocket, ready to read it to them if there had been occasion. There has been since then no further attempt to act more plays, and all the actors are now gone.

But the Governor and his instruments were not content with this victory. They must appeal to the public for approbation of all his conduct on the occasion and for censure upon that of the opposers to the law; and Sullivan with the intrepidity of face peculiar to himself came forward in last Thursday's paper,[1] under the signature of a *Friend to Peace*, with the professed design to criminate the breakers of the statute and to justify the executive authority. You will probably see in the two next *Centinels* a couple of pieces signed *Menander* in answer to him. I presume he will reply but I think the discussion must terminate unfavorably to him. The subject cannot be very interesting to you, but perhaps an interest in the success of the writer may induce you to peruse the discussion. I will send you the publication of the *Friend to Peace* by the next post, and as you will receive the *Centinel* regularly you will there find the answers of *Menander*.

The unanimity of the electors in this State was by all accounts a sore mortification to his State majesty. It angered him to the heart and he vented his peevishness upon the first objects that presented themselves to him. It was on the same day with the election that he made his attack upon the players. He made several difficulties about signing the warrant upon the treasury for the pay of the electors, and delayed until a third message from them was accompanied with an intimation to him that unless he signed the warrant immediately, they should go to their homes without receiving their pay at all. This implied menace had its effect, and he signed the warrant. But he has affected to be much alarmed for his own safety, and to be in terror lest a mob should attack his person or his house. There have been in the public prints several foolish inflamma-

[1] The *Chronicle*.

tory squibs threatening him with tar and feathers or with breaking his windows; but they have been treated with general contempt, and there has not been the slightest symptom of any popular excesses against him, though he has endeavored to excite them in support of his whimsical passion against the theatre.

A French and English newspaper has been commenced in this town which is to contain among other things a summary account of the French Revolution.[1] This account is very handsomely written by one of the Aristocratic party now here, having been driven from the Island of St. Domingo by the triumphant faction there.[2] He has aimed at impartiality as much as he could; but if you read the narrative you will find he is very bitter against the Duke of Orleans to whom he attributes all the calamities of his country. The first number only has been published, and the editor has forwarded one of them to you which he will continue to do. The translation of that part of the paper will be done by me, and I imagine the paper itself will not be continued long after that publication is finished. The proposals are only for six months.

I hope you will not consider me as trifling with my time for spending it in translating French politics and discussing theatrical questions. My pen has lain dormant for nearly a year and a half, and perhaps its revival may with some propriety be by essays upon subjects not of the first magnitude. There has been upon my mind a strong sentiment of delicacy which has kept me silent in the midst of all the

[1] The *Courier de l'Univers*, the second newspaper in French published at Boston. The first was the *Courier de Boston*, published by Nancrede, the instructor in French at Harvard College, and issued its first number April 23, 1789, but received too little support for its continuance.

[2] Probably a M. d'Hauteval, to whom Adams gave a note of introduction to his father, January 5, 1793.

scurrility of which you have been the object. The charges which private malice and public faction have employed as instruments against you, have been so despicable in themselves, that common sense and common honesty must have felt some degradation in descending to the refutation of them. I have thought that where they could have any possible effect, sober reason and plain truth could not counteract it, because the minds affected must be too blind or too wicked to feel the operation of just sentiments.[1] The event of the election as far as we know it has corroborated my opinion. As to the general measures of the federal government, when I have seen them attacked artfully and insidiously, as has frequently been the case, I have often thought of defending them, but as often have concluded that my assistance could not be necessary and could be but feeble. The government I supposed needed it not, and as to my own advancement I could really see nothing in public life but what it was my object to avoid. I have been really apprehensive of becoming politically known, before I could establish a *professional* reputation. I knew that my independence and consequently my happiness in life depended

[1] In September King had noted that Washington would be rechosen without opposition; "whether the opponents of Mr. Adams will combine their opposition I consider as uncertain. Should this be the case Clinton will be their man." In New York Burr was intriguing, and, as Hamilton believed, in favor of Clinton and against Adams; but his operations extended to Connecticut, where Edwards took an interest in him, and to Pennsylvania, where Dallas supported his ambitions. As between these two aspirants Hamilton preferred Clinton, who had invariably been an enemy of national principles, to Burr, who was marked by an absence of all principle. He wrote, however, decidedly in favor of Adams, who "whatever objections may lie against some of his theoretic opinions, is a firm, honest, and independent politician." See also his letter to Adams, in *Works of Alexander Hamilton* (Lodge), VIII. 290. King believed "for no good that any support be given to the project of Mr. Adams' degradation." *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 426, 430.

upon this, and I have sincerely wished rather to remain in the shade than to appear as a politician without any character as a lawyer. These sentiments have still great weight in my mind, and if therefore you should think me squandering my attention upon subjects of too trivial import, I hope you will do me the justice to believe that it is not for want of judgment in my comparative estimation of things. . . .

MENANDER[1]

. . . The submission of the minority to the will of the majority, he[2] supposes to be the essence of a free government; and the will of the majority he thinks is only to be collected from the suffrages of the constitutional legislature: Or if that legislature should themselves overstep the constitutional bounds, a case which, he admits, may happen, he points to the remedy provided, by a recurrence to the Supreme Judicial Court. But his principle in the full latitude to which he extends it is not true; and, if it were, it does not prove the position in support of which it is advanced. In a free government the minority never can be under an obligation to sacrifice *their rights* to the will of the majority, however expressed. The constitution of this State is expressly paramount to the laws of the legislature, and every individual in the community has the same right with the legislature to put his own *honest* construction upon every clause contained in the constitution. Every individual ought to regulate his conduct upon such occasions by his own construction, and if that construction militates with that of the legislature, he has an indisputable right to violate their laws predicated upon their construction. If this be true the conduct of those citizens of Boston, who from a cold and deliberate opinion that the law prohibiting theatrical entertainments is unconstitutional, have attended the exhibitions in Board-Alley, is not unjustifiable. For as to the *violent measures* which the *Friend to Peace* mentions as having been resorted to, *they* have all been on the part of the

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, December 19, 1792. [2] James Sullivan.

government. That the law was openly violated is true, and from the nature of the case it could not be otherwise. But if disobedience was justifiable at all, the publickness of that disobedience could not make it unjustifiable. So far have the friends to the theatre been from deserving the charge of resorting to violent measures, that they even avoided resistance against the violent measures which were adopted against them, and by an example of moderation very honorable to them, preferred to make the sacrifice of their pleasures, and rather than contend with the *strength* of that law, the *justice* of which they could not acknowledge.

But the *Friend to Peace* mentions to them another remedy, by recommending a trial before the Supreme Judicial Court. And is this recommendation made in order to prove their conduct *unjustifiable* in violating the law? Does it not rather prove the absurdity of his own censures upon the public manner in which the law has been violated? At one moment he cries out "Where are the champions for the unconstitutionality of the law?" And at another he charges them with resorting to *violent measures*, merely because they come forward too boldly, and challenge its penalties by an open violation. He acknowledges that the only determination of the constitutional question must be, by a Jury under the direction of the Judges, and yet he denominates *violent measures* the action without which that determination cannot be had. The proposal that any individual who has broken the law should *consent* to have an information filed against him, is somewhat singular. A writer who talks so much about free governments, methinks should have been more cautious in proposing such an expedient to men who complain of a deprivation of constitutional rights. In order to prove that they have acted unjustifiably by the breach of a law, he tells them they ought to assume to themselves the duties of the Attorney General, to accuse themselves; that they ought to consent to a mode of proceeding which in his own opinion is dangerous in any government, when that mode of proceeding is pursued directly against themselves. The

friends of the Drama, Sir, are under no obligation, civil, political or moral, to *court* the animadversion of the law. When Mr. Hampden in the time of Charles the first, refused to pay the ship money, he did not go to the star chamber, and complain of his own *refusals*. A tax of twenty shillings was assessed upon him, which he held to be illegal. The twelve Judges of England had already delivered their opinions that the tax was legal. Mr. Hampden refused to pay it. His violation of what the Judges had declared to be law was open and public, but he did not solicit the prosecution which he sustained. The cases appear to me to be nearly parallel. The friends of the theatre in Boston have publicly contravened *an act of the legislature*, which they do not consider as the law of the land; they have not eluded the regular and constitutional discussion of the point; they have not betrayed a consciousness of doing wrong, by shrouding themselves in secrecy; they have not fled from the vengeance of the government which they have provoked; they have not shrunk from beneath the gigantic arm, which has been raised in "attitude to smite" against them; but an invitation to become necessary to a prosecution against themselves; a request that they would call the thunders of the government down upon their own heads, may excite their derision, but will not probably influence their conduct.

The observation relative to the dangerous tendency of an open disregard to established laws is just, but in its application to the present subject, it begs the question in dispute, for no obedience is due to an unconstitutional act of the legislature. And this is known full well to the chief magistrate, whose champion the Friend to Peace professes to be. For if sophistry itself can ever pick a constitutional question from a law of the United States, *he* seems disposed to be not merely public, but ostentatious in professing disobedience. As to the cases put by way of illustration, of the people of Medford undertaking to work on Sunday; I confess I cannot see its connection with this subject; and I do the justice to the logical talents of the Friend to Peace to believe, that it was introduced rather for the sake of glancing at

the excise on still-heads, than to give any additional weight to his argument.

I flatter myself I have now shown that the conduct of the opposers to the prohibitory theatrical statute has not been proved to be unjustifiable by the Friend to Peace. On the contrary, I now contend that their complete justification will flow from his own principles. Considering the law as unconstitutional, they have sought as far as could reasonably be required of them, all the remedies which their censurer points out to them. They have not been guilty of that wanton, unnecessary violation of the established law, which he charges them with. They did not act in opposition to the statute, until they had sought in vain for relief from the Legislature nor until the Legislature added to the mortification of rejecting their request by the insulting silence of a triumphant majority. When they found that a sullen denial of satisfaction was the only answer which the Legislature vouchsafed to make to their complaint, they proceeded to the other remedy mentioned by the Friend to Peace. They acted in open opposition to the statute, and if they had not Hibernian blood enough in their veins to turn States witnesses against themselves, they had enough of American spirit about them not to avoid by any subterfuge a legal investigation. The question of constitutionality they have always been ready to meet, and in the meantime, they have regulated their conduct by their own sincere opinion upon the subject.[1] . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, December 22, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

If we are truly informed the election of President and Vice-President is decided by the votes of which we have

[1] A second communication, examining the conduct of the executive, was printed in the *Columbian Centinel*, December 22, 1792, and a third, making a correction in statement, but no change in position, in the same journal, December 22, 1792.

already heard, and which extend no further than Maryland. From the indication of the disposition of the people I feel much personal gratification, as it shows that the aspersions of private malice and of public faction have had no success in shaking the reverence and affection which your countrymen entertained for you, and which you have so richly deserved of them; but I feel still more satisfaction on their account, because it shows their attachment to the government itself, and that the artifices of unprincipled ambition or of misguided jealousy have not led them astray from the pursuit of their own essential interests. Great pains it seems were taken to unite the opposition in favor of Governor Clinton, and canvassing letters were received by the electors in Rhode Island and Connecticut from New York, and even from Virginia. But in both the former States the electors and the people, instead of being influenced by those letters, resented very much such an insidious attack upon the liberty of their suffrages, and their unanimous votes may convince the abettors of anarchy and confusion that at this time they have "overleapt themselves and fallen on the other side."[1]

The subject of theatrical amusements still continues a gentle agitation in this town. We had yesterday a town meeting to consider the propriety of *remonstrating* to the Legislature against the prohibitory statute. You will see the remonstrance, together with sundry resolutions and an address to be presented upon the occasion to the Governor, in this day's *Centinel*, and you will find my name there with twenty others as a *Committee* to present the address, etc. The town meeting was more numerous than usual, and yet the proceedings were next to unanimous, because all the

[1] The votes of New York, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia were unanimous for Clinton.

other party absented themselves, knowing very well that they would be out-voted, if they made their appearance. Our friend Otis, you will see, is also upon the Committee, though he was decided in his opposition to the last year's petition for the repeal. He was present at this meeting, and after being chosen upon the Committee, he made a short speech in which he said that he always felt happy in endeavoring to promote the wishes of his fellow citizens, and very cheerfully submitted to the decision of the majority, even when it was contrary to his own opinion; that he would therefore with pleasure co-operate in any measures to express the sentiments of the town and to obtain the object which they desired. But in order to avoid an appearance of inconsistency he thought it necessary to declare, that he had seen no reason to alter a single sentiment of the opinion which he had formerly expressed, and he still continued to think that a theatre would do no good to the town. It was a little singular that Sullivan was nominated four or five times to be a member of this same Committee and upon being put was negatived by a majority of votes against him. From several circumstances I have reason to suspect that his nomination came from Jarvis, whose policy upon this occasion seems to be to *press* into the service all the men of abilities or influence who have been in the opposition. But with respect to Sullivan the object failed; for so long as his being on the other side afforded the voters a decent *pretext* for voting against him, a majority was found who chose to gratify their inclination to vote against him at any rate. So soon as the number of the Committee was completed, Jarvis made a speech, in which he said he hoped it would be universally understood that the negative passed upon Mr. Sullivan was not from any intended disrespect to him, but only because it was conceived his official situation made it

improper to require his aid to obtain a repeal of the law. This smoothed the matter over well enough, but several persons told me they voted against him, because they were glad of an opportunity to insult a man whom they hated and despised. Here then the matter rests, and I am apprehensive you will think me tedious in giving so minute a detail of it. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, February 10, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

As I was going to meeting this afternoon a gentleman met me in the street, and desired me to fill him a writ immediately, which he intends to have served as early as possible in the morning. I accordingly did it, and it is now too late to attend the afternoon service. I think I cannot employ the leisure time thus thrown on my hands better than in giving you an account of the commercial catastrophe now taking place in this town, which occasioned the singular application to me that I have just mentioned. The bubble of banking is breaking, and I am very apprehensive that it will prove as distressing to this town as that of stock-jobbing was about twelve months since at New York. Seven or eight failures of considerable consequence have happened within these three days, and many more are inevitable I think in the course of the ensuing week. The pernicious practice of mutual indorsements upon each other's notes has been carried as now appears to an extravagant length, and is now found to have involved not only the principals, who have been converting their loans from the bank into a regular trading stock, but many others who have undertaken to be their security. The stagnation of trade produced in the fall of the year by the smallpox, and very much increased by a

remarkably open winter, which has not admitted of the usual facility of communication with the country upon the snow, have undoubtedly accelerated this calamity, which, however, would have been the more oppressive the longer it would have been deferred.

These misfortunes will undoubtedly give a degree of activity to my particular profession which has not for several years been allotted to it. But I shall personally derive but very little immediate benefit from it. I see no prospect of its adding much to my business at present, and if it should, there is no satisfaction in thriving by the misery of others.

I received last evening your favor with a quotation from the Echo, which has been read here, as well as the Hartford newscarrier's wit, with pleasure by those who are fond of laughing at the follies of our great man.[1] The situation of our affairs is such, and the passions and rivalries of our most conspicuous characters assume an aspect so alarming, that we have indeed much to apprehend for the fate of the country. It is a subject upon which my mind does not dwell with pleasure, and I am the more desirous to keep myself altogether unconnected with political topics, because my sentiments in general I find are as unpopular as my conduct relative to the town police or to the theatrical questions. I have no predilection for unpopularity as such, but I hold it much preferable to the popularity of a day, which perishes with the transient topic upon which it is grounded; and therefore I persisted in refusing to appear at the anarchical dinner which was denominated a civic feast, though I was urged strongly by several of my friends to become a subscriber upon principles of expediency. Those friends disliked the whole affair quite as much as I did, but thought it was necessary to comply with the folly of the day. Upon

[1] Hancock.

the whole however it appears to me that the celebration of that day has had rather an advantageous than an injurious effect. The specimens of equality exhibited in the course of it did not suit the palates of many who had joined in the huzzas. The Governor thought it proper to be sick and not attend, and I believe has ventured to express his disapprobation of the proceedings in several particulars. We have Jacobins enough, but in this instance they overshot themselves, and shewed their teeth and claws so injudiciously, as to guard even the weaker members of the community against them.[1] . . .

MARCELLUS [2]

I [3]

At a period, when all the European powers with whom we have any considerable commercial intercourse, are involved in war, it becomes an interesting question to every American, what line of conduct ought to be pursued by the United States as a nation, and by their citizens as individuals, in relation to the contending parties. The individual must follow the dictates of his own discretion, and the path to be pursued by the nation must be pointed out by the wisdom of the National Legislation: But upon a subject in which all are so deeply interested, it is the right, and in some measure the duty of every citizen, to express his opinions with decency, but with freedom and sincerity.

The solution of the question as it respects the country, involves

[1] This "civic feast" is described in the *Columbian Centinel*, January 26, 30; and *Massachusetts Mercury*, January 26, 1793. It is sketched in McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II. 91.

[2] Genêt, the first minister from the French Republic to the United States, landed at Charleston, South Carolina, April 8. On April 22 the proclamation of neutrality was issued in Philadelphia. Adams was one of the earliest to discuss the political situation, for Hamilton ("Pacificus") printed his first paper June 29.

[3] *Columbian Centinel*, April 24, 1793.

in itself an answer to that which relates to individuals. There have indeed been certain suggestions in the public papers, and in private circles something similar has been heard, of an intention among some of our fellow citizens to arm privateers, and commit depredations upon the commerce of one of the parties under the authority of another. It is to be hoped that this violation of the laws of nature and nations, this buccaneering plan of piratical plunder, may not in any instance be carried beyond the airy regions of speculation, and may never acquire the consistency of practical execution. If the natural obligations of justice are so feeble among us, that avarice cannot be restrained from robbery, but by the provisions of positive law, if the statute book is to be our only rule of morality to regulate the observance of our duties towards our fellow creatures, let those whose ideas of equality are so very subservient to their private interests, consult the treaties between the United States and the several powers now at war, which by the constitution of the United States, are declared to be "the supreme law of the land," and in the 21st, the 19th and the 20th articles of the several treaties of commerce with France, Holland and Prussia, they will find, that by taking letters of marque or arming privateers with commissions under either of the powers against either of the others, they would subject themselves to the punishment of pirates. There can be no doubt but that a similar act of hostility against any subject of the king of Great Britain, would be a direct violation of the 7th article of the treaty of peace. If we were not bound by any treaty whatever, with either of the nations, the natural obligation of neutrality would operate upon us individually, unless the nation should take a decisive part in favor of one of the parties. Every citizen would be legally responsible for all the property which he might seize with violence under a commission to which he could not be entitled, and if he should preserve himself from the punishment of piracy, he would be liable to make entire satisfaction for all the damage he might occasion, and to restore his ill-acquired plunder.

It is indeed of material importance to the commercial interest of this country, that our merchants should show a peculiar degree of circumspection in their conduct, because the country becomes at a season so critical as this, in some measure responsible for them. In the just and honorable pursuit of their legitimate interest, it is the duty of the nation to support them with all its force and all its authority. In time of war, the subjects of all belligerent powers are frequently disposed to violate the rights of neutral nations. The master and the crew of a privateer, fitted out and cruising for the sole purpose of seizing upon defenceless wealth, and stimulated by the prospect of a valuable spoil, often feel the full force of disappointed rapaciousness, when after a long chase they discover that the ship, upon the plunder of whose cargo they had already feasted their imaginations, is rescued from their violence by the protection of a neutral flag. They are not apt to be nice in their distinctions of morality. Their disappointed passions often seek a vent against the unarmed opulence which eludes their grasps, and they are frequently guilty of insolence, and sometimes of oppression towards those who are not in a condition to resent their inju tice. In such case the individuals of the neutral nation, who suffer in consequence of such lawless proceedings, have no remedy but to call upon the sovereign of their own country to support them in their demand for satisfaction: Should any complaints arising from causes like this become a subject of negotiation, between the United States and either of the contending parties, it behoves us all, as we value our interests, or our reputation, that no occasion to retort a complaint that the neutrality was first violated on our part, should be given. In order to obtain justice, for any citizen who may suffer by the iniquity of a foreigner, we must disavow in the most decisive manner, all acts of iniquity committed by our own citizens, and our government can never have an expectation of gaining a compensation for the *injured* individual, unless they can compel the *injuring* individual to make compensation in his turn.

To expatiate upon the natural injustice and wickedness of

privateering under a foreign commission against a nation at peace with us, would be as idle as an attempt "to add a perfume to the violet." The practise of privateering, even in its most excusable form, between nations formally at war, has been condemned by the most amiable and virtuous moralists. In the treaty between the United States and the King of Prussia, it is provided that in case war should arise between the contracting parties, "All merchant and trading vessels employed in exchanging the products of different places, and thereby rendering the necessaries, conveniences and comforts of human life more easy to be obtained, and more general, shall be allowed to pass free and unmolested: and neither of the contracting powers shall grant or issue any commission to any private armed vessel, empowering them to take or destroy such trading vessels or interrupt such commerce."[1] This clause in the treaty, which was I believe the first instance in which two great nations have adopted this system of benevolence and humanity, has been justly admired and applauded; it was adopted by the late French National Assembly, when they declared war against the Emperor of Germany, and the real friends of mankind must regret that the policy is abandoned at this time, when the war extends to all the great commercial nations of Europe. For, if as the poet, with more than poetical truth, has said, "War is murder," the plunder of private property, the pillage of all the regular rewards of honest industry and laudable enterprise, upon the mere pretence of a national contest, to the eye of reason and justice, can appear in no other light than that of highway robbery. If, however, some apology for the practice is to be derived from the uncontrollable laws of necessity, or from the iniquitous law of war, certainly there can be no possible excuse for those who incur the guilt without being able to plead the palliation; for those who by violating the rights of nations in order to obtain a licence for rapine, manifestly show, that it is only the lash of the executioner that binds them to the observance of their civil and political duties.

[1] Art. XXIII, treaty of 1785.

II[1]

Non nostrum, tantas componere lites.

Having attempted in a late paper to show that a rigid adherence to the system of Neutrality between the European nations now at war, is equally the dictate of justice and of policy, to the individual citizens of the United States, while the Nation remains neutral, the question recurs, what is the line of conduct prescribed to the nation itself, at this delicate juncture, by those immutable laws of justice and equity, which are equally obligatory to sovereigns and to subjects, to republics and to kings. I shall not make any consideration of general policy a separate subject of inquiry, because I hold it to be one of the most undeniable principles of government, that the truest policy of a nation consists in the performance of its duties. The rights of nations are nothing more than an extension of the rights of individuals to the great societies, into which the different portions of mankind have been combined; and they are all mediately or immediately derived from the fundamental position which the author of Christianity has taught us as an article of religion, and which the revised declaration of rights of the National Convention in France have declared, to contain the essence of liberty. "*Liberty*," says the new Declaration of Rights, "*consists in the power of doing whatever is not contrary to the rights of others.*" "Whatsoever," says the Saviour of mankind, "*you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*" Let us therefore be cautious to do nothing contrary to the rights of others, and we shall continue to enjoy and to deserve the blessings of freedom. Let us do as we should choose others might do to us, and we shall deserve the favors of Heaven.

If these are the principles upon which our national conduct is to be grounded, it will follow, that an impartial and unequivocal neutrality between the contending parties is prescribed to us as a duty, unless we are bound by some existing contract or stipulation, to make a common cause with one of them.

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, May 4, 1793.

I have already said it: The natural state of all nations, with respect to one another, is a state of peace — damus petimusque vicissim: It is what we have a right to expect *from* them, and for the same reason it is our duty to observe it *towards* them. In addition to this natural obligation, we are bound by express treaties with France, England, Holland and Prussia, to observe the laws of peace with the subjects of their different governments, and we have no right to interfere in their contentions. Whatever may be the current of our sentiments, or of our opinions; whatever may be the language suggested by our passions, or the wishes inspired by our affections, we are not constituted judges of the respective merits of their cause. From a feeling of gratitude towards a nation which assisted us in the days of our own calamity, we may be disposed to throw a veil over their own errors and crimes, and wish them that success which their frantic enthusiasm has rendered so improbable. As the descendants of Englishmen, we may be willing to lose the memory of all the miseries they inflicted upon us in our just struggle against them, and even the relics of their resentment, which still refuse the complete fulfilment of the treaty of peace, and we may wish them still to retain their reputation for successful courage and conduct in war. As men, we must undoubtedly lament the effusion of human blood, and the mass of misery and distress which is preparing for the great part of the civilized world; but as the citizens of a nation at a vast distance from the continent of Europe; of a nation whose happiness consists in a real independence, disconnected from all European interests and European politics, it is our duty to remain, the peaceable and silent, though sorrowful spectators of the sanguinary scene.

With the reasons for neutrality suggested by these considerations of natural duty and of positive stipulation, a forcible argument concurs, derived from our interest. In the general conduct of all the commercial European nations, the advantages which will be thrown into our hands, and the activity and vigor which will be given to every branch of our commerce, are too obvious

to need any discussion. As the natural consequence of war, the necessities of all the belligerent powers must increase in proportion as their means of supply will diminish, and the profits, which must infallibly flow to us from their wants, can have no other limitation than the extent of our capacity to provide for them.

With all these inducements to a decided neutrality, let us look at the other side of the medal, and see what would be the consequence of our making ourselves partizans of the contest. First, we should be engaged in a quarrel, with the laws of nations against us. It would be a violation of our political duties; a departure from the principles of national justice, and an express breach of the positive stipulations of peace and friendship with the several belligerent powers, contained in the treaties which I have already mentioned. An act of partiality in favor of either party would be an act of perfidy to the other.

I have so full a confidence in the equity and virtue of my countrymen, that I should rest the argument on this point, if I had not perceived that a contrary system of policy is avowed by men of some influence among us, and openly recommended in some of the public prints of the day. A system, which professing to arise from an extraordinary attachment to the cause of Liberty and Equality, may in reality be traced to the common sources of private avarice, and private ambition, perhaps at once the cause and effect of an implicit devotion to France, and an antipathy to England, exceeding the limits of a national resentment.

To men of this description, arguments derived from the obligations of natural justice, or of written contract will be perfectly nugatory. "The Rights of Man," will be their answer to the one, and "Liberty and Equality," to the other. I apply, therefore, to a principle of more efficacious operation in their minds, if their own interest is in any degree connected with that of their country, and ask them what would be the inevitable consequence of a war with all Europe, excepting only the present prevailing power of France? The experience of the late war, would perhaps discourage an attempt on the part of Great Britain to conquer this

Continent, but we have a sea-coast of twelve hundred miles every where open to invasion, and where is the power to protect it? We have a flourishing commerce, expanding to every part of the globe, and where will it turn when excluded from every market of the earth? We depend upon the returns of that commerce for many necessaries of life, and when those returns shall be cut off, where shall we look for the supply? We are in a great measure destitute of the defensive apparatus of war, and who will provide us with the arms and ammunition that will be indispensable? We feel severely at this moment, the burden of our public debt, and where are the funds to support us in the dreadful extremity to which our own madness and iniquity would reduce us? Not to mention the infallible destruction of our finances, and the national bankruptcy, which the friends of the system I am combating, would perhaps welcome as a blessing. Are these, Sir, imaginary apprehensions, or are they objects of trivial moment? Our national existence may depend upon the event of our councils in the present crisis, and to advise us to engage voluntarily in the war, is to aim a dagger at the heart of the country.

III[1]

Omnium primum natus tueri publicam fidem. LIV.

It has been inquired by citizens anxious for the welfare of the country, and aware of the distress to which it must inevitably be reduced by an European war, whether we have not already pledged our faith so far as to preclude us from any present consideration of convenience or inconvenience, and whether we are not by our own voluntary engagement bound to take the part of the present government in France, especially in case the West India islands should be attacked by Great Britain.

By the eleventh article of the Treaty of Alliance with France, the United States "guaranty to his most Christian Majesty, the possessions of the crown of France in America."[2] But the course of human events has either totally absolved us, or at least sus-

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, May 11, 1793. [2] Treaty of 1778.

pended the obligation of this clause, and it cannot be made even a plausible pretext for involving us in the present war. My reasons for this opinion are,

1. That the guaranty is *to his most Christian Majesty, of the possessions of the crown of France.* I ask, who is at this time *his most Christian Majesty?* A part of the French nation, and all the other powers of Europe will answer, he is the son or the brother of the late Louis the XVIth. The National Convention, and the present republic of France will say there is no such man. The office and all its powers have been extinguished in the blood of the person with whom your contract was made. If the article binds us to either of the parties, the question which of the two is entitled to claim the performance, is now a question to be settled by the event of a civil war, and neither party can call upon us to decide it for them.

2. That supposing the revolutions of France are now completed, and a republic firmly established, it may be doubtful whether they have not by their change of government, dissolved this clause of the treaty: I know it is a general principle of the laws of nations, that the rights and obligations of treaties survive the internal revolutions of government, and therefore that the republic of France may be entitled to the benefits of engagements contracted with the former Monarch. But to this rule there are many exceptions; the first Constituent Assembly were so fully of this opinion that they thought the nation absolved from all such treaties previously made, as might be injurious to their interests, and the present government have extended the principle much further, when [as] a justification for opening the Scheldt, contrary to the positive and express stipulation of many treaties, they have formally denied the obligation of any compact, which was contrary to *the natural Rights of Men.* Upon speculative principles it may be very questionable how far the sovereign control of a French Republic, over islands at three thousand miles distance from them is consistent with such natural rights, and it would be difficult to mark the distinction which should prohibit every act of

jurisdiction exercised by one nation over a river flowing through the territories of another, and at the same time allow a supreme authority over colonies placed by the hand of nature at so wide a distance from the metropolis. The *possessions of the crown of France*, as guaranteed by our Treaty *to his most Christian Majesty* appear to me to have formed a part of that Constitution of government which then existed in France; they were a part of the monarchy, and under the new government they can no longer be considered as *possessions*, in the same sense in which they were understood when the United States bound themselves to the guaranty.

3. Should both of those ground for the opinion I am supporting be considered as erroneous, and the clause in question be held as binding us to the French Republic, in the same manner as it formerly did to the King, it remains to inquire what was intended by the guaranty, and what are the duties which it has prescribed to us? During the administration of the royal government, had the authority of the sovereign been guided by the maxims of speculative freedom or of practical tyranny; had he provoked a rebellion in the islands, by oppressing the planters or by liberating their slaves; the guaranty in the treaty would not have bound us to assist him with our blood and treasures, in enforcing an absurd and unnatural Government against the perpetual resistances which it would necessarily provoke. Had the late King of France, like other kings of whom we read in history, veiling his insatiate ambition, under some specious pretence of glory, of dignity or of safety, declared a wanton and unjustifiable war against any or all of the commercial nations in Europe, and had his possessions in America been conquered by his enemies in the course of such a war, he never could have called upon the United States by virtue of this guaranty, to repair the injuries of his folly, and to sacrifice themselves in support of his pernicious projects. It is unnecessary to fatigue the public with the pedantry of quotations from the writers upon natural and political Law, but it may be laid down as an universal principle, that no stipu-

lation contained in a treaty, can ever oblige one nation to adopt or support the folly or injustice of another. In applying this principle, it becomes necessary to observe, that the administration of the French government over their colonies, since the first revolution of 1789 has been such as to keep almost all their islands in a constant state of rebellion and civil war; by the former of these calamities the slaves have been united against their masters; by the latter the masters have been divided against each other. From the chaotic mass of human passions, a collection of all the most violent and inflammable elements has been selected and combined together; the torch of the furies has been applied to the composition; and the miserable islanders have been the victims of the fatal explosion.

To such a state of desperation have these devoted colonies been reduced, that a formal deputation, as we are informed by the public papers, have solicited for them the protection of the British government; and we are now told that this protection has been promised; that the King of Great Britain has agreed to take possession of those colonies and to hold them in trust for *his most Christian Majesty*, the power to whom the letter of our guaranty has promised the assistance of the United States. An arbitrary and oppressive system of administration compelled us to renounce the authority of Great Britain, and France assisted us to maintain our honorable warfare. A similar evil has driven some of the French colonies to a similar remedy; one of them has even attempted a Declaration of Independence, and all the others would doubtless have done the same, were they not profoundly sensible that the time is not yet come, for the Lion to lie down with the Lamb, and that the justice of their cause would avail them but little against the powerful injustice of their oppressors. But surely there would be something singularly absurd and iniquitous, to see the United States support the French in a plan of oppressive administration over their colonies, as a reward for rescuing them from the oppression of Great Britain. It would be such a total subversion of all moral and political consistency, such a cove-

nant between virtue and vice, such a coalition of liberal freedom with despotic tyranny, as can scarcely be imagined without a confusion of ideas, or expressed without an absurdity of language.

4. The last ground upon which I consider this guaranty as dissolved or at least suspended, is, that by the act of the French government, it has been rendered impracticable. They have declared war against all the naval powers of Europe. What the event of that war will be, it is not given to man to foretell; but we cannot take a part with the French Republic, without uniting all the rest of Europe against us; which upon every rational calculation of probability, would be dooming ourselves to inevitable ruin and destruction. We are therefore commanded by a law, which supercedes all others, by that uncontrolable law of nature, which is paramount to all human legislation, or compact, to remain at peace, and to content ourselves with wishing that laureled Victory may sit upon the sword of justice, and that smooth success may always be strewed before the feet of virtuous Freedom.

FROM CHARLES ADAMS

July 29, [1793.]

My dear Brother:

I received the copies of your oration[1] by Mr. Atkinson, for which I give you my own and the thanks of my friends. Unwilling to trust my own partial judgment upon the performance, I have endeavored to collect the opinions of my friends here, who are most remarkable for their taste, and my own ideas have been justified by the universal applause which has been bestowed upon your oration. I cannot but admire the prudence which you have observed in steering so cautiously between the Scylla and Charybdis of public opinion, and surely it was your duty to offend no one in a performance of this kind. In a late letter you observe that

[1] Published with the title: An/Oration,/pronounced/July 4th, 1793,/at the/Request of the Inhabitants/of the/Town of Boston;/ in Commemoration/of the/Anniversary of/American Independence. . . . Boston:/ Printed by Benjamin Edes & Son. M, DCC, XCIII.

some of my friends think me too strenuous upon the wrong side. I must be thought so, if I deny a single democratic principle. Every man who now ventures to disapprove of a single measure of the French, is according to modern language an aristocrat, and I had rather submit to the imputation, than indiscriminately to approve of every transaction of that nation. God forbid that I should ever become the advocate of tyranny, whether exercised by a single or a many headed monster. How strenuous are the party in Philadelphia to engage us in a war! What abuse and reviling constantly fills that mint of defamation, the *National Gazette!* How determined should be the conduct of the executive! Surely the conduct of a foreign minister is reprehensible who talks of appealing to the people from the decision of the first magistrate. If ever there was a time when firmness was required, it is now. What do you think of the decision of Judge Peters in your part of the world? I would ask one question. Suppose a French ship should come up to the wharves of New York, and carry away to Philadelphia twenty or thirty British merchantmen. Could our Court of Admiralty have jurisdiction of it? We have had a case similar to that of the ship *William*, before our District Court. It was argued on the part of the libellants last week, and more ingenious and curious argument I never heard in a court. Messrs. Troup and Harison showed themselves to the greatest advantage. To be sure the concluding quotation of Mr. H., applied to Judge Duane, could not but raise a smile on the countenance of those who know his character. He is suspected of leaning toward the opinion of Judge Peters, for whom he has a great veneration; but I am inclined to believe that after the argument, and the application of the verse from Horace, "Justum et tenacem," etc., he will not have obstinacy enough to decide similarly. We daily expect a French fleet in this port. I dread the moment. We have many turbulent people in this city, who would wish to take advantage of such an event. We have already been witnesses to the commencement of very tumultuous proceedings. A writer in the Philadelphia papers, Pacificus, has claimed the attention of the public. I am

happy to find most men of character accord with the sentiments of this writer. Who he is, I know not. The Secretary of the Treasury, amongst us, has the credit of being the author. The pieces would not disgrace his pen. Entre nous, it seems to me rather surprising that the Vice President has not been called to Philadelphia. Surely his council is necessary in the present circumstances of this country. Pray explain to me. You may have a better opportunity of knowing the reasons than myself or the multitudes who ask me the question. My respects and love to all friends.

Yours affectionately,

CHARLES ADAMS.

COLUMBUS

I[1]

. . . . . .

It is indeed a novelty in the diplomatic world, to see the envoy of a foreign nation assuming a character like this. The French nation have been justly celebrated for their skill in the cabinet;

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, November 30, 1793. The correspondence between Gênet and the Secretary of State is in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 141–148. Gênet's despatches to his own government are in Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States*, 1791–1797 (American Hist. Association Report, 1903).

" Washington was indeed under obligations to him [J. Q. A.], for turning the tide of sentiment against Genet, and he was sensible of it and grateful for it. The enthusiasm for Genet and France and the French Revolution was, at this time, almost universal throughout the United States, but in Pennsylvania, and especially in Philadelphia, the rage was irresistible. . . . J. Q. Adams' writings first turned this tide; and the yellow fever completed the salvation of Washington. . . . Not all Washington's ministers, Hamilton and Pickering included, could have written those papers, which were so fatal to Genet. Washington saw it, and felt his obligations. He took great pains to find out their author. The first notice I had of his design to appoint my son to a mission abroad, was from his Secretary of State Randolph, who told me he had been ordered to enquire of the members of Congress, and others, concerning the life and character of J. Q. Adams, and, he was, that day to report in favor of his appointment." *John Adams to William Cunningham, Jr.*, October 13, 1808. *Cunningham Correspondence*, 35–37.

they have produced many statesmen, whose talents have marked them out as models for the ministers of all other nations; but this was an expedient which never occurred to the imagination of any of them. The glory of the discovery was reserved for Genet alone, and the future d'Ossat's, d'Avaux's, d'Estrade's, and Torcy's of his country, may look back with reverence to him as the original inventor of the science of typographical negotiation.

In a country where genuine freedom is enjoyed, it is unquestionably the right of every individual citizen, to express without control his sentiments upon public measures and the conduct of public men. Because the rulers of freemen, being only the dispositaries of their power, are accountable to them for the execution of the trust, and the treasure of public liberty being common property, every individual is authorised and required to contribute his assistance for its security. This privilege ought not, however, in common cases, to be extended to the conduct of foreign ministers. So long as the agent of a friendly nation confines himself within the circle of his own rights, however offensive the demands he is instructed to make may be, the pretensions of his country ought not to be a subject of personal animadversion upon him. The Ambassador is amenable to his constituents for the execution of *his trust*, and even in an enemy the character should be respected. But if the Ambassador on his part descends from that station; if he publicly damns with one dash of his pen, all the known rules and customs established in the intercourse of nations, if he openly disclaims all submission to the authority, and respect for the opinions of the writers who have been by the consent of all civilized nations, acknowledged to contain the true principles of national justice and equity; if he professes loudly a determination to appeal from a constitutional to an unconstitutional tribunal, in the country where he resides; if he threatens to negotiate with the *people*, without any authority or commission from his own sovereign for that purpose, if he is constantly pouring forth in the public prints, a stream of abuse, under the shape of Letters, of Addresses, of Remonstrances, and Protests, against the very government to

which he was accredited, he thereby renounces all the privileges which surrounded his public character, and makes himself obnoxious to every feather in the wing of wit, and every shaft in the quiver of satire. . . .

"And I, too, am a scribbler." I, too, as a citizen of the United States have the right to express my opinion upon the pretensions of Citizen Genet. Numerous as have been the animadversions of the public upon his conduct, there are yet some points of view, in which it has not been sufficiently considered. I have no personal acquaintance with the man, nor feel any personal resentment or animosity against him. My sentiments for his country, like those of every true American, are those of a partial attachment; but as in my opinion his actions bespeak him the most implacable and dangerous enemy to the peace and happiness of my country, I hold it to be a moral and religious duty, to support the opinion with the reasons upon which it is grounded.

II[1]

When the Minister from the French Republic declared his determination to appeal from the decision of the regular and constituted authority, upon the construction of certain treaties, to the people of America, the first sentiments which the declaration excited in the breasts of that people, was the spontaneous emotion of the heart. They considered it as an insolent outrage offered to the man, who was deservedly the object of their grateful affection; as an insult upon the character of their common friend and benefactor, and they spurned the attempt to degrade their Hero, with scorn and disdain. "The people," says Junius, "are seldom mistaken in their *opinions*, in their *sentiments* they are never wrong." When the Americans were rudely called upon to pronounce upon the conduct of the patriot, whose disinterested virtues and superior talents had been employed in their service through all the vicissitudes of fortune; whose generous magnanimity had supported them in the most distressing moments of national

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, December 4, 1793.

depression; whose expanded patriotism had participated with rapture in the most blissful scenes of national exultation; the glory of their war, and the ornament of their peace; when a beardless foreigner, whose name was scarcely enrolled upon the catalogue of Liberty; a petulant stripling, whose commission from a friendly power was his only title to their respect, and whose only merit was his country, presumed to place himself in opposition to the *father of their country*, and to call for their approbation to support his claims, they viewed the application as an indignity offered to themselves, and even before their judgment had deliberated upon the merits of the case, they rejected the arrogant pretensions of the foreigner, with pointed indignation.

When they came, however, to consider the transaction independent of any reference to their own prepossessions and feelings they immediately perceived, that the earlier decision of their judgment was perfectly conformable to the dictates of their hearts and that the voice of reason and justice was in exact unison with that of their affections. They had delegated to the Congress of the United States the power to regulate their commercial intercourse with foreign nations. They had delegated to the President, the power of negotiating with the ministers of foreign power, and with the concurrence of the Senate, to make treaties with them. They had specially directed their President in the Constitution, which defined his authority and prescribed his duties, to "take care, that the laws be faithfully executed;" and, if, in the course of his administration, a difference of opinion upon the meaning of a national compact should arise between him and the agent of a foreign power, they had not reserved to themselves the right of judging between them. Nor did they imagine, that they had thereby imparted to their Chief Magistrate, a power in the smallest degree arbitrary. For if the construction, upon which his measures were grounded, should be erroneous, they had provided a judiciary power, competent to correct his mistakes. If he proceeded upon a wilful and treacherous misinterpretation, they had secured the means of removing him from his office by impeachment; but

in either case, they had retained no appelate jurisdiction to themselves. It was therefore clearly demonstrated, that the intention of the Minister, was no less hostile to the Constitution, than insulting to the government of the Union. Nor was the measure of the Envoy supported by a shadow of right on his part. A foreign Agent, his official powers were circumscribed within the limits of his commission; and his right to negotiate was only commensurate with his credentials. Where then was the commission; where were the credentials, which authorised him to treat with the people of America, through any other medium than that of their government? He had not, he could not have any at all, and the impotent menace of the Minister could serve no other purpose, than to betray the ignorance and heedless rashness of the man.

The few remaining partizans of the citizen Minister among us were aware of the inauspicious operation, which this declaration would have upon the public mind, and struggled with fruitless endeavor, to extricate him from the net which his own folly had woven; they shuffled and equivocated; they quibbled and denied; but their ingenuity could not keep pace with his impetuosity. No sooner did their toilsome industry raise a feeble rampart in his defence, than his own violence would immediately batter it down. Did they venture to dispute the fact? He was ready to produce "damning proof" against himself, and with many self-admiring commendations upon his own republican frankness and energy, to silence every friendly sceptic, by an avowal of his guilt. Did they strain every nerve to create a distinction in his behalf, and explain his intention of appeal, to be merely an insult upon the person of the Chief Magistrate, and not upon the government of *America?* He was sure to disclaim so frail a discrimination, and to declare that he was incapable of disrespect to the "Hero of Liberty," but that his threat was pointed at the government of the Union. It was in vain to search for precedents of diplomatic impudence, to give a color of authority to his proceedings; worm-eaten records of elder times, the musty prescriptions of

superannuated wisdom, could afford no measure for the mighty grasp of his aspiring ambition. The learned sages of national jurisprudence, whose indefatigable labors had compiled a system of rules for the conduct of sovereign powers, founded upon the immutable laws of natural justice, and the immemorial practice of civilized nations, had too long been rewarded for their exertions, by the veneration of ages. They had all written in chains, and could therefore be no guides for him who had been so recently let loose.

The appeal is therefore made. Addresses to the Republicans of *New York;* Letters to the President of the Union; Letters to Citizen Duplaine, to General Moultrie; Letters to the Secretary of State; Letters to the Lieutenant Governor of *Massachusetts;* Protests against the revocation of Citizen Duplaine's exequatur, "and all the weapons of a wordy war," crowd in rapid succession upon the public prints; as if the judgment of the people, like the kingdom of Heaven, were to be taken by violence. But though the Minister "can call spirits from the vasty deep," yet it is beyond the reach of his magic, to "make them come when he calls for them." The people hear his ravings, with the same indifference, that they hear the roaring of the ocean on the beach. It is the evidence of a tempest at a distance, which heightens their enjoyment of the serene tranquility of their own hemisphere. The Ambassador finding this attempt lately to fail, though baffled, does not appear to be disconcerted: his original and inventive genius multiplies with amazing facility the American Jurisdictions, and in the fury and whirlwind of his passions for appealing, he appeals not only to the people of *America*, but to the Congress of the Union, and to the Legislature of *Massachusetts* also. Appeal at any rate he must; and as he has already been acknowledged to be the first typographical negotiator, he may with equal propriety be admitted to the claim of the first *Minister of Appeals* upon record.

Waiving for the present any observations upon the two last of these appeals, which are equally unwarrantable with the first;

and setting aside the constitutional objection to the first, which has already been the subject of some of the preceding reflections; I must now request your indulgence, Mr. Russell, with a few remarks upon the mode in which the Minister has conducted his appeal to the people, and upon the wisdom of the constitutional policy, which has entrusted the exclusive right of political communication with foreign powers to the government of the Union.

The declaration of the Ambassador, was understood, at the time, as meaning, that he would raise an insurrection of the people against the measures of the government. It could not easily admit of any other construction, because insurrection is the only method whereby the people can reverse the decisions of their government. If however any doubt could be entertained of the meaning conveyed by the expression, the uniform tenor of every measure adopted by the Minister since that period, serves to confirm the opinion which was formed at first. The numerous newspaper publications which have been already mentioned, are so many addresses to the people of *America;* else why is the correspondence of a foreigner intruded upon the American public? All those letters, addressed to particular individuals, that pretended answer to a complimentary address from the republicans of *New York*, that doughty protest against the dismission of citizen Duplaine, crammed like a loaded blunderbuss, with all the future vengeance of the French republic, all must be considered as the mere vehicles of sedition against the government of the Union. Else why are a few citizens of *New York* addressed as constituting the whole American Republic? And why is an official, though very irregular communication to the chief magistrate of this commonwealth, immediately published in the newspapers, by the authority of the protestor, before anything has been transacted upon it? No doubt they are all meant as appeals to the people of *America;* appeals to their generosity, appeals to their gratitude, but above all, appeals to their fears. The people of *America*, however, are not easily terrified or cajoled into measures apparently destructive to their own happiness.

The resentment of the whole nation was not easily to be excited without a cause, against a government which was daily gaining upon all their affections by promoting their happiness. Mr. Genet therefore endeavors to support his failing influence by connecting himself and his interests with a particular party of American citizens, separate from the whole body of the people: a party professing republican sanctity beyond the rest of their fellow-citizens, and scarcely endeavoring to disguise sentiments, hostile to the national government of the country. How far this connection has proceeded, and whether any regular plan of operations has been concerted between these new associates, cannot be fully ascertained; but we have known an American jury, compelled by the clamors of a collected multitude, to acquit a prisoner without the unanimity required by our laws. We have heard of printed caricatures circulating through *Philadelphia*, representing the President of the Union, and a Judge of the Supreme Court, with guillotine suspended over their heads. We have seen twenty citizens of *Boston*, all of them inoffensive, many of them personally respectable, held up as objects of detestation, to the crew of a French armed vessel, and posted at the mast; we have known a citizen of *New York*, and a member of their Legislature, threatened by an anonymous assassin with inevitable death, for expressing with the freedom of an American, his opinion upon the proceedings of the Minister; and we now witness the formation of a lengthening chain of democratic societies, assuming to themselves the exercise of privileges, which belong only to the whole people, and under the semblance of a warmer zeal for the cause of liberty, than the rest of the people, tacitly preparing to control the operations of the government and dictate laws to the country. Heretofore, in the most exasperated times of our political dissentions, upon occasions when the public mind had been raised to the highest pitch of irritation, the sacred obligations of a jury, have always been preserved inviolate, and no American ever thought of giving a bias to their decisions, by the menace of external violence; as little would an American villain have thought of

the guillotine as an instrument of punishment. The proscription of our citizens under the designation of aristocrats was evidently effected by a combination of foreign habits with domestic malice. Even the expedient of threatening assassination by anonymous letters, was I believe unprecedented among us: And as to the democratic societies, they are so perfectly affiliated to the Parisian Jacobins, that their origin from a common parent cannot possibly be mistaken. These symptoms never originated in the healthy constitution of American freedom; they are all indications of an imported distemper, a distemper in comparison with which, if it should spread over the continent, the pestilence which has so lately depopulated a sister city, and called for the exertions of all our tenderest sympathies, was a public blessing.

To divide in order to govern, has been one of the favorite maxims of political villany, ever since the relative stations of tyrant and slave have been the fashion of the world. Every public measure of the French Minister, since the profession of his resolution to appeal, may be traced to the policy of arming one part of *America* against the other. His intended application to Congress to pass his official conduct under their examination militates against all the principles which he has professed as much as against the American constitution; but he expects it will furnish him with an opportunity to "place under the inspection of *every member*, his instructions, his correspondence, his conferences," and if the whole body, in imitation of their constituents should turn their ear from the voice of the charmer, some individuals may perhaps be found among them, who will listen with complacency. If he cannot corrupt the sacred fountain of legislation, he hopes at least to poison some of the streams which flow from it. If he cannot make the Congress itself subservient to his factious purposes, he expects at least to inflame the divisions, which have naturally arisen from the collision of opinions and interests in an assembly of freemen. By dividing the parts, he hopes to control the whole.

The same disposition is discovered in his application to the commander in chief of the Commonwealth, and in his demand that

the *Legislature of Massachusetts* should suspend their legislative functions to sit as a court of judication upon the official conduct of Duplaine. He could not imagine that our general court had forgotten the interdiction pronounced by the constitution of the state, against the exercise on their part of any judicial powers, other than those which are necessarily involved in the execution of their legislative duties: — But the nice and delicate interstructure of our general and particular governments had not escaped his penetration. He saw two mighty powers participating in large portions of the American sovereignty. He perceived that although they had been skillfully contrived to co-operate in conducting the affairs of the people, yet that the several proportions of the public authority had not been distributed between them with such perfect accuracy, as to leave their respective rights in every instance unquestionable. Had not his acquaintance with the operations of the human heart informed him of the natural tendency which two separate and concurrent powers must have to mutual hostility, a recent occurrence which has appeared since his arrival in *America*, might have taught him that when "*two authorities are up; neither supreme; confusion may be most easily introduced into the gap, to take the one by the other.*" From a comparative view of all these transactions, it appears therefore clear, as the noon-day beam, that the intention of the Ambassador has been to lay hold of every prejudice, to fasten upon every passion, which could be raised in opposition to the government, and to weaken the force of United America, by placing its component parts in hostile array against each other.

And now, Sir, do not the consequences of this foreign usurpation force themselves with irresistible conviction upon the heart of every American, who feels interested in the independence of his country? Among the nations of antiquity, the *Athenians* were equally distinguished for the freedom of their government, the mildness of their laws, the sagaciousness of their understanding, and the urbanity of their manners. Their Constitution was purely democratic, and their penal laws were few; but the bare

appearance of a stranger in the assemblies of the people, they made punishable with death, from a deep and well-grounded conviction, that of all the dangers which encompass the liberties of a republican State, the intrusion of a foreign influence into the administration of their affairs, is the most alarming, and requires the opposition of the severest caution. The American Constitution was framed upon the same principles, and provides with equal vigilance, though in a different form, against the same evil. It has entrusted with punctilious nicety all the political intercourse of the country, with other nations, to the several departments of the national government. It does not permit any of the States upon any terms whatever, to enter into a treaty, alliance, or confederation; nor without the consent of Congress so much as to enter into any agreement or compact with a foreign power. And if the wisdom of this provision needed any proof in addition to the whole tenor of human history, the train of events which is the subject of these remarks would support it, with "*confirmation strong as proof of holy writ.*"

In a state of civil and political liberty, parties are to the public body, what the passions are to the individual. And as the passions are said to be the elements of life, so the animated and vivifying spirit of party seems to be essential to the existence of genuine freedom. Like the passions, too, it is a prolifick source of misery, as well as of enjoyment: Like them it requires a severe and continual exertion of restraint and regulation, to prevent its breaking out into excesses destructive to the Constitution. It can be no subject of lamentation to a rational mind, to perceive the political differences which arise among our own citizens. Even the degree of warmth which mingles itself in our civil discussions, is an inconvenience necessarily connected with the enjoyment of our most valuable rights; the candidates for popular favor may endeavor to further their personal views, by standing forth as the advocates and champions of the public interest, and diversify their claims in proportion to the diversity of public opinions; the people suffer no detriment from their animosities; and the general

welfare is perhaps promoted, by placing the jealousy of one patriot as a guard over the ambition of another. But here let it rest. The interference of foreigners upon any pretence whatever, in the dissensions of fellow-citizens, must be as inevitably fatal to the liberties of the State, as the admission of strangers to arbitrate upon the domestic differences of man and wife is destructive to the happiness of a private family. If the partizans of any particular faction cease to rely upon their own talents and services to support their influence among their country men, and link themselves in union with an external power, the principles of self-defence, the instinct of self-preservation itself, will suggest a similar connection to their opponents; whichever of the party nominally prevails, the whole country is really enslaved; alternately the sport of every caprice, that directs the conduct of two foreign sovereigns, alternately the victim of every base intrigue which foreign hatred and jealousy may disguise under the mask of friendship and benevolence.

Is this a condition tolerable to the imagination of *American* freemen? Is this a state for which the country has, with such glorious exertions, strained at every nerve, and bled at every vein, in throwing off the shameful fetters of a foreign bondage? Was it worthy of the toils which our sages, and our heroes endured? Was it worthy of the generous and heroic self-devotion, which offered the slaughtered thousands of our friends and brethren, as a willing sacrifice at the holy altar of American Independence, to be made the miserable bubbles of foreign speculation, to be blown like feathers to and fro as the varying breath of foreign influence should be directed: to be bandied about from one nation to another, subservient to the purposes of their mutual resentments, and played with as the passive instruments of their interests and passions? Perish the American! whose soul is capable of submitting to such a degrading servitude! Perish the American, whose prostituted heart could forsake the genuine purity of our national worship, and offer at a foreign shrine the tribute of his slavish adoration!

It was to eradicate, as far as human skill could effect, a weed so noxious to our political soil; it was to deprive the honourable spies from foreign nations of the means of tampering with particular portions of the American people, that the policy of their national Constitution confined their agency to the government of the Union. Without attempting to involve ourselves in the mazes of ancient history, let us attend only to the occurrences which have happened within our own recollection. If we inquire what is the cause which has been within a quarter of a century, fatal to the Liberties of *Sweden*, of *Geneva*, of *Holland*, and of *Poland*, the answer will be one and the same. It was the association of internal faction, and external power; it was the interference of other nations in their domestic divisions; and if, while all these terrible examples of national humiliation and misery are staring us in the face, we behold a foreign Agent among ourselves, violating the spirit and intention of our Constitution, and pursuing every measure which can tend to involve us in the same ruin, and add us to the melancholy catalogue of subjugated freemen; while we drop a tear to the memory of their Liberty, let us remain firm and immoveably faithful to our own; and remember that the eye of the basilisk is less to be dreaded, than the designs of such a man.

III[1]

The letter from the Minister of the French Republic to the Secretary of State, relative to the revocation of DUPLAINE'S exequatur, has been a fruitful topic of speculation to the American public. The mind is scarcely capable of conceiving, nor the language of expressing, a sentiment of disgust and indignation, but what has been liberally bestowed upon this singular ebullition of diplomatic frenzy. Even the most strenuous advocates of our dependence upon France have at length been compelled to separate the cause of the country from that of the man, and to abandon the justification of the representative, while they still affect to dread the resentment of his constituents. They pretend to think that

[1] *Columbian Centinel*, December 7, 11, and 14, 1793.

the government of *France* will support the extravagance and violence of the Minister; that they will countenance his excesses which his warmest American friends dare not attempt even to extenuate, and that although the forms of his proceeding do not admit of palliation or excuse; yet the substance of his objections against DUPLAINE'S dismission was without foundation, as the President of the United States was not expressly authorized by the constitution to revoke the exequatur of a French Vice-Consul.

It is by no means my intention to intrude myself unauthorized, unthought of, and uncalled for, upon the public, as the champion or defender of the President's measures. I could have wished it were possible that an examination of the Ambassador's conduct and pretensions, might have been made altogether independent of any reference to the proceedings of our own government. Because on the one hand it is so easy to attribute sinister motives to a political writer, that I should have been desirous to avoid any discussion which might *be suspected* of originating in private purposes; and on the other, being totally unconnected with the illustrious character at the head of the union, and with the government over which he presides, I can reason on the propriety of their measures only from what is publicly known, and may possibly contribute to weaken the effect of their authority, by an attempt to support it upon the grounds which they perhaps would disclaim. A good cause is often injured by an unskilful defence, and an unsuccessful effort always lessens the facility of a practical operation. But in this instance the refutation of Mr. GENET'S absurdities necessarily involves a consideration of the question in which they originated; and the evidence of his folly cannot be produced without bearing testimony to the wisdom of his opponents. I must therefore be permitted to take an enlarged view of the subject, and in animadverting upon the strange and novel principles advanced by the Ambassador, to make some cursory observations upon the principles against which he has declared such relentless war.

In the month of June last, ANTOINE CHARBONET DUPLAINE

received from the President of the United States an exequatur recognizing him as Vice-Consul, for the Republic of France, within the States of *New Hampshire*, *Massachusetts* and *Rhode Island*, and declaring him free to exercise and enjoy such functions, powers and privileges, as are allowed to Vice-Consuls of the French Republic, by the laws, treaties, and conventions in that case made and provided.

On the tenth day of October last, the President, by letters patent under the seal of the United States, did wholly revoke and annul the above mentioned exequatur, and declared the same to be absolutely null and void from that day forward.

The reason assigned by the President for this revocation, in the letters patent, is "that the said DUPLAINE having under color of his said office committed sundry encroachments and infractions on the laws of the land, and particularly having caused a vessel to be rescued with an armed force out of the custody of an officer of justice, who had arrested the same by process from his court, it was therefore no longer fit nor consistent with the obedience due to the laws, that the said DUPLAINE should be permitted to continue in the exercise and enjoyment of the said functions, powers, and privileges."

It is this revocation of which Mr. GENET in his letter to the Secretary of State, by a well chosen expression, *hastens* to declare that he does not acknowledge the validity. The reasons that he gives for his *hasty declaration* are, "that the Constitution of the United States has not given the President the right of exercising this authority; and that it can be exerted *only by the sovereign* of the agent, or by the one to which he is sent." He therefore demands of the President, to procure an examination by the *Legislature, representing the sovereign people of Massachusetts*, of the conduct of Citizen DUPLAINE, and modestly recommends to the President's imitation his own (that is the Minister's) example in demanding of Congress an examination of his conduct. He insists with the more confidence upon this step, because a popular and virtuous Jury, three times threw out the complaint of the Attorney for the

District of *Boston*, against Citizen DUPLAINE, who, he says, was finally acquitted in the most honourable manner.

Here then are blended in a confusion, which can be accounted for, only from the haste of the Ambassador, three very distinct subjects for the consideration of the public. The first is the denial of the President's right to dismiss a Vice-Consul. The second is the right of examining DUPLAINE'S conduct, attributed to the Legislature of *Massachusetts;* and the third is the assertion of the Vice Consul's innocence, and what is called his acquittal. It would perhaps be more regularly methodical to begin with the consideration of the last point, in which the whole transaction, whence the contest originated, may be unfolded to the public. But the questions of right are altogether independent of the facts. It is totally immaterial to the question relative to the authority of the President, whether DUPLAINE was guilty of infringing the laws of the land or not. Mr. GENET in fact affirms, that if his subaltern had been guilty of all that has ever been laid to his charge; nay that if a Consular Agent has, under colour of his office, committed crimes as atrocious as the human heart is capable of conceiving, and the hand of executing; still the President has no authority to revoke his exequatur, or to refuse recognizing him as any longer entitled to the enjoyment and execution of his Consular functions. The examination therefore of the three several points may pursue the course which arises from the letter itself.

But such is the singular incoherence of the Minister's political system, that before we can be admitted to the examination of one principle advanced by him, we are obliged to contend for another, which at one instant he formally acknowledges; and the next moment, still more formally denies. After having read in his letter to the Secretary of State, an admission that the *sovereign*, to whom a minister or Consular Agent is sent, may for good cause discharge or suspend, or send them away, as a national act of justice, it might have been expected, that this principle would be considered as one of those undisputed points, one of those *data* of national jurisprudence, upon which in fair argument, a train of

reasoning might be founded, without a previous demonstration of its truth. What then must be our surprise, when we perceive that this hair-brain'd Hotspur of an Envoy, had no sooner made one rational concession, than he repents of it, and sends off post haste, to Citizen DANNERY, instructing him to protest, and re-protest against the act of the President, as assuming a power which *the nation itself could not either delegate or possess?*

Since therefore upon his more mature reflection, he has thought fit to deny the right of the nation itself, it becomes necessary to follow him through all his mazes, and to consider how far this last assertion is warrantable.

We are therefore to enquire, whether by the *Laws of Nations*, there is in every sovereign and independent state, a power competent to dismiss the agent of a foreign power for encroachment upon, and infringement of the laws of the land, under colour of executing the duties of his office?

The laws of nations, it is well known, are nothing more than the principles of reciprocal justice and equity, which common sense and natural reason dictate as having the greatest tendency to promote the mutual advantage and happiness of all nations in their intercourse with one another. They derive their obligation from that fundamental maxim of nature and religion, to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. The application of this universal rule of right gives a solution to every political question that can arise among nations as well as individuals. But as this application to every particular transaction between political societies might occasion perpetual altercation among them, unless some less comprehensive principles were admitted as deducible from it, the practice of all civilized nations has been to acknowledge these subordinate axioms, because they have heretofore been acknowledged in similar cases, and thus custom and precedent have always been admitted as authorities in support of any national act, which does not evidently militate against the stronger obligations of natural justice.

The opinion of wise, learned, and virtuous men, who have

made the science of national jurisprudence the study of their lives, and who have published for the benefit of mankind the result of their laborious researches, are likewise admitted by the common consent of nations to have much weight, as evidence of the conclusions, which in particular cases are to be drawn from the general principle.

It is readily admitted, that all arguments derived from the two latter of these sources of national law, are subject to the correction and control of the former, and can have no force otherwise than as they are conformable to it. That precedent is often iniquitous, and the opinions of the most ingenious and instructive writers are sometimes erroneous. They are therefore not to be implicitly followed as infallible guides, but to be recurred to as experienced conductors, and consulted as impartial advisers.

When therefore the French Minister "thanks God, that he has forgotten what GROTIUS, PUFFENDORF and VATTEL have written upon the laws of nations," he ought to be told, that his forgetfulness "is not a thing to thank God on." When he affirms that these writers "were hired jurisprudists, and wrote when they were all enchained," he asserts what is not true. GROTIUS, the venerable and successful defender of the Christian Faith; the learned and strenuous supporter of the freedom of the sea; the firm and dauntless republican asserter of his country's rights against the encroachments of princely usurpation, was one of the greatest and most illustrious of men, that ever adorned and dignified the human character. PUFFENDORF was indeed the subject of a monarchical government, but his reputation as a man was such as would have done credit to the most virtuous Commonwealth of ancient or modern times; and his system as a writer pursues the path which GROTIUS had explored, and is only an improvement upon his principles. VATTEL himself declares "that he was born in a country of which *liberty* was the soul, the treasure and the fundamental law. That he would not have written if he could not have followed the light of his conscience. That nothing restrains his pen, and that he was incapable of prostituting it to

flattery." To insult the memory and slander the reputation of men like these, of men whose virtues and genius have deserved well of mankind, does as little credit to the head as to the heart of Mr. GENET. It is not the liberal and enlightened spirit of freedom, but the furious ignorance of the Mahometan barbarian, who burnt the magnificent library of Alexandria, because the concentration of all wisdom and all virtue in the Koran rendered every other boon useless or pernicious.

If however the Minister shall insist upon forgetting all the memorials of former wisdom; it is to be hoped that he will permit the Americans to retain this memory as a companion to their senses. They have no disposition, I think, to plunge into the same Lethean stream, and if any of their devotion should be excited upon the occasion, they will rather pay their tribute of gratitude to the common parent for what they remember, than for what they have forgotten; rather for the possession, than for the loss of their recollection.

From the ground of natural season, upon the principles of public justice, there can be no doubt, but that some power should exist in every country, competent to remove the servant of another sovereign, who makes the duties of his office a cloak for the most violent infraction of the laws of the land. For if such a power does not exist, then the lives, the liberty and the property of the citizen must be perpetually at the mercy of a stranger. This doctrine is too absurd, even for despotism itself. How intolerable then must it be in a country which has so cautiously protected the enjoyment of those blessings against all internal authority? The expedient proposed by Mr. GENET of complaining to the Master of the culprit, and obtaining his recall or dismission, must in many instances have been a very inadequate remedy for the evil. In cases of minor offences which do not require a speedy reparation, and where the removal of the man is to be considered as a penalty for past, rather than a precaution against future guilt —this mode of proceeding may be adopted. But if an armed force is applied to resist the execution of the laws; if war is levied

and maintained against the country itself; to talk of an examination by one Legislature, for the purpose of complaining to another, who is to complain again to a power at three thousand miles distance, which must twice be traversed before relief can be obtained from the mischief, what is it but to add insult to injury? Even among the nations of *Europe*, between whom the regular communication is continual, and where a few days may suffice to fill the interval between the demand and the answer, this supplicatory remedy would frequently be ineffectual. But it must be less than the shadow of a remedy between *France* and *America*, with an Atlantic ocean rolling between them.

There is another reason why this mendicancy of justice ought not to be the only means of obtaining it, because it would leave no alternative between a degrading dependence of the party injured upon the offender's master for reparation, and the miseries of war. For suppose the complaint and the demand of removal made, and suppose the Sovereign of the criminal refuses to recall him, professing to be doubtful of his guilt, or determining to support him in it, then the insulted nation must either plunge headlong into a serious war, or tamely submit to see its authority trampled on and despised, without relief or satisfaction. Without recurring to any writer for instruction upon this point, common sense and common humanity must teach us that the interest of all nations ought to multiply as far as possible the means of avoiding war.

The right of doing justice to itself is very distinct from that of requesting that justice be done, and they are both equally necessary, inherent and unalienable by a nation as much as the right of personal liberty in an individual.

But the same principle of reciprocal benefit and utility requires that this right should be used with caution and reluctance; that it should not be permitted to interfere with the rights, and as little as possible with the transient interests of the other nation; that it should be exerted only on occasions of heinous offences on the part of the foreign agent, and *that the measure be the most lenient and*

pacific that can be adopted, competent to answer the end of national justice.

The refusal to acknowledge the offender in the capacity which has supplied him the means of guilt, is undoubtedly an act of this description. By depriving him of the power of repeating the crime, it affords a security against his evil intentions to the nation which has already been prejudiced by them, and therefore is a competent remedy. It violates none of the natural or civil rights of the man himself, and is therefore entitled to the praise of lenity. If at the same time, care is taken that the rights and interests of his constituents suffer no detriment, in consequence of his dismission; the justice of the other party can never consider it as an act of aggression. The denial of this right therefore cannot be justified upon any principle of Natural Reason.

In considering the subject, on the footing of national custom, we shall find numerous instances of public Ministers who have not only been discharged from the execution of their functions, but even sent home to their masters, by the sovereign to whom they had been sent, and not unfrequently with a demand of further punishment of the offender. The practice is supported by the unanimous concurrence of opinion among the writers upon national law. In proof of this, we shall recur not only to the worm-eaten authors whose authority is disclaimed by Mr. GENET, but to several others who are equally with them entitled to *his* contempt, and the reverence of *mankind*.[1] . . .

They [these quotations] all prove that even a public Minister may be suspended or discharged from the exercise of his functions, by way of prevention, and sent home to his master for punishment, by way of penalty. If then this measure may be adopted against an Ambassador, the immediate Representative of a Sovereign; against a Minister, whose sacred office, whose inviolable sanctity, whose perfect independence are so strongly dwelt upon, by all the writers from whom these extracts are made, how much more forcible is the conclusion that it may be pursued against a mere

[1] Here followed examples drawn from Grotius and other writers.

Consular Agent, whose character by the same laws of nations, and even by the express stipulation between *France* and *America*, is considered as vested with very few of those extraordinary privileges and immunities which are allowed to public Ministers.

Now, Sir, all the arguments which are contained in the Protest against the revocation of DUPLAINE's exequatur, are founded upon the pretended supposition that the removal of a foreign Agent must necessarily be a limitation, obstruction, or abolition of his master's rights. The object of the argument which you have now read, is to prove that a foreign Agent may be removed, without affecting the right of his constituent at all.

The right of the nation itself being established, we are again brought back to the assertion of Mr. GENET in his letter to the Secretary of State.

In this letter, as it has been before observed, he acknowledges the right of the sovereign to discharge, send away, or suspend the Ministers of foreign nations, or their consulary agents, but denies that the Constitution of the United States has delegated this authority to the President.

The Constitution of the United States says that *the executive power* shall be vested in the President. That he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers, and that he shall *take care that the laws be faithfully executed.* In committing this trust, the people of the United States, undoubtedly gave to the office which they invested with this authority, all the powers which are essential to its fulfilment; to suppose otherwise would be absurd in the extreme. The idea of expressly commanding a man to do a particular act, and at the same instant of prohibiting all the means, without the use of which that act becomes impossible, is too ridiculous to require a refutation. When therefore the constitution of the United States commands the President of the Union to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, this prescription is of itself a warrant, authorising him to do any act consistent with the laws of the land, which may be necessary to answer that valuable purpose.

If these laws are violated by a citizen of the Union, there are forms of trial, and modes of punishment prescribed by the municipal laws of the country; and it is part of the President's duty, by virtue of the above cited clause, to take care that these be applied with efficacy. But if the infraction is committed by a foreign agent, under pretence of executing a foreign commission; then the offence on the part of the agent is an offence against the Laws of Nations, as well as against the municipal Law; for the injury done to the latter, a Consul is subject to the same judicial trial, and the same penalties as an American citizen. But for the outrage committed against the Laws of Nations; for the violence offered in the consular capacity, the proceedings of the President, in taking care that the laws be executed, must be grounded upon the Laws of Nations, and not upon the foundation of local legislation.

Now by the Law of Nations I have already attempted to prove, that a foreign agent, whose conduct has been criminal, may be discharged from the further exercise of his functions; or sent home without demand of punishment; or sent home with such demand; or sent home with the requisition that he be delivered up for punishment; and the only question that can remain is, whether by the Laws of Nations, these acts of severity are in every country properly within the department of the Executive power?

"In every government, there are three sorts of power: the Legislative; the Executive in respect to things dependent on the Law of Nations; and the Executive in regard to things that depend on the civil law."[1]

The Executive Power, vested by the Constitution in the President of the United States, comprehends both the latter of these powers; since it authorises him to receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; and with the concurrence of the Senate, who are given him as a constitutional council for those purposes, to send Ambassadors and negotiate Treaties. The dismission of a foreign Agent for having violated the Laws is clearly in its own

[1] Montesquieu, *Spirit of Law*, XI. 6.

nature an Executive Act. It cannot be necessary to prove this; no one that has a precise idea of the distinction between Legislative and Executive functions, can for a moment hesitate to acknowledge it. If then this act of authority is in its own nature an Executive Act, the right to perform it must of course be vested in the officer to whom the Constitution has committed the Executive Power.

The truth of this position cannot be disputed, without denying, at the same time, the right of the President to deliver the exequatur, which [it] is contended he cannot revoke. The Consular Convention between the United States and France provides that "the Consuls and Vice Consuls shall be bound *to present their Commissions*, and that *there shall be delivered to them without any charges*, the exequatur necessary for the exercise of their functions." Now there is no clause in the Constitution, authorising the *President* to deliver this exequatur, which by the stipulation in the Convention it is agreed *shall be delivered*. The right is not expressly contained in the authority to receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; for Consuls are not included in either of these descriptions by the Laws of Nations, and they are excluded from them by the Consular Convention. But the delivery of an exequatur is purely an Executive Act, and it is therefore properly performed by him, in whom the Constitution has vested the Executive Power. The same thing is to be said of its revocation.

I believe the French Minister is not yet prepared to contest the right of the President to deliver the exequatur. Yet his conduct hitherto must warn us against any hasty conclusion, that he will be deterred from a measure of this kind by the absurdity of the thing. Such are the rules of *his* logic and of *his* morality, that a past acknowledgement on his part is no security against his future denial of a right or of a fact. If, therefore, the case should prompt him to deny the President's right to grant an exequatur, we may be permitted to remind him, that by this denial he must invalidate the authority which has been and still is ever exercised by all the French Consuls on the Continent. The exequatur and its revoca-

tion stand upon the same ground, and you cannot destroy the one without annihilating the other.

If the instrument delivered to the Consuls by the President is not legalized by the clauses of the Constitution which vest in him the Executive Power, and direct him to take care that the Laws be faithfully executed, it is not the exequatur, which the Consular Convention declares to be *necessary*, for the exercise of their functions. If they have not received this necessary exequatur, all their official proceedings hitherto have been null and void, and the revocation of an instrument, which is of itself a nullity, cannot possibly be to them a reasonable cause of complaint.

I am aware that the protest affirms that "the act by which a government acknowledges the character of foreign Delegates is not on its part a formal and necessary consent to their political existence." If the denial of this position rested barely upon a counter assertion from an officer of the American government, perhaps we might apply the adage, "Who shall decide when Doctors disagree?" But as the express letter of the Consular Convention declares the exequatur *necessary* for the exercise of the Consular functions, there is no room for asking any questions on the subject.

The protest further says, "the Constitution of the United States has given to the government the right of receiving, not of dismissing; for acknowledging, not of denying foreign Agents." The same idea is contained in the Minister's letter to the Secretary of State. I have already said, that the President's authority to deliver the exequatur to a consul is not founded upon the clause which empowers him to receive Ambassadors. But admit that it were, does not the right of acknowledging necessarily involve that of refusing to acknowledge? Suppose that Mr. GENET, instead of producing a commission from the Executive Council of the Republic of *France*, had brought one, under which his conduct in this country hitherto would have been natural and consistent, from the emigrant Princes; according to his principles, the President must have received and acknowledged him in that capacity.

Suppose that the present government of *France* should recall Mr. GENET; and he from his propensity to dispute rights, should hasten to declare that he did not acknowledge the validity of the recall, and appeal upon the question to the Executive Council, who commissioned him, or to the ex-Princes above-mentioned, and in the meantime insist upon being still received and acknowledged as the Minister Plenipotentiary from *France:* The President, forsooth, would have a right to receive, but none to dismiss him; a right to acknowledge, but none to deny him. The doctrine would, no doubt, be a very convenient one for him, and possibly by maintaining it, he means to provide for his future occasions. It is well to be secured against every contingency, but Mr. GENET must not rest his fate upon the imbecility of the American government.

But "the Constitution of the United States, having denied the government the right of declaring war, this prohibition ought to extend itself to every sort of offensive act." It is not true that the Constitution has denied the *government* the right of declaring war. I am not disposed, Sir, to cavil upon words, and am willing to make every allowance for the blunders of Mr. GENET'S translators; but the affectation of using the word government, instead of the proper expression of *President of the United States*, is a defect inherent in the original, and may easily be traced to the embarrassment, not of the translator, but of the author himself. His recent experience had taught him that the people of *America* were not in a temper to countenance an insult upon the President of the Union; and he thought it more adviseable to veil this new attack upon his authority, under the cover of a different expression. The protest therefore is worded against an act of the government, which the revocation is not, and cautiously avoids speaking of the President, who is really the object of the attack. The passage here cited is an instance of the manifest absurdities into which his awkward expedient had led him; but what opinion must he entertain of the American understanding, when he supposes that it can possibly be the dupe of so miserable an artifice?

What opinion of their judgment, when he thinks them less attached to the government of their country, than to the person of their chief magistrate?

When he tells us how far the prohibition *ought* to extend itself, is it an *amendment* or a *construction* of the Constitution, that he means to dictate to the government? If an *amendment*, his command implies an enlargement of the functions limited by the constitutional act: If a *construction*, the government cannot obey his directions, without *narrowing* their defined authority. Just before this he says that a government can neither *enlarge* nor *narrow* the marked limits of their functions, but some singular fatality never permits him to advance a reasonable position, without compelling him immediately to contradict himself, and disclaim his transient and unnatural coincidence with truth.

Nor is it true that the Constitution of the United States has reserved to the *Representatives of the people* the right of declaring war. An assertion so glaringly false, or so inexcuseably inaccurate, affords the clearest demonstration, that its author is equally destitute of every qualification necessary to amend or to construe a Constitution.

There is therefore nothing in the letter of the Minister, or in the protest bearing the name of the Consul, but made by his superior's direction, that can give the faintest color to his pretence, that the President was not authorised to revoke DUPLAINE'S exequatur.

But if the President has this authority, he may involve us in a War. This argument applies not against the power, but the abuse of it. If the foreign Agent is dismissed for real misconduct on his part, the dismission gives no cause of complaint, much less of War to his master. If the President exerts this authority without satisfactory evidence of the Agent's guilt, and thereby exposes the country to the first resentment of a foreign power, it is a breach of trust for which he is liable to impeachment, and removal from his office. There is no doubt but the execution of the President's powers might be such as would involve the country in a War. By giving or refusing his assent to a bill he might produce a War;

by performing at particular junctures any part of his acknowledged rights he might occasion a War; nay, by acknowledging and receiving an Ambassador from a power not authorised to send one, the case might happen that he must inevitably drive the Country into a War. Yet this is represented not only as an authorised, but even an obligatory function of his office, by the Minister himself, both in his letter and in the protest.

The Constitution of the United States has made the *Declaration of War a Legislative Act*, and thereby has expressly vested the right of making it in the Congress, to whom it has entrusted the *Legislative Power*. This principle was, no doubt, adopted upon the mature deliberation, and upon the conclusion drawn by the framers of the Constitution, and by the people of America, that this declaration properly belongs to the Legislative Department of Government. But the Constitution has not said, that the President shall perform no function which in its consequence might be productive of a war. Such a provision would have been tantamount to a declaration that the President should have no powers at all.

In resuming the argument which is now submitted to the public, the principles upon which it is grounded may be reduced to the following simple positions:

That there is in this country, as in all sovereign states, a power competent to dismiss the agent of a foreign power, for any heinous and aggravated offence against the laws, committed by him under color of executing his office.

That the exertion of this authority, from the nature of the thing, and by the practice of all nations, falls properly within the Executive Department of Government.

That the administration of foreign affairs is delegated to the Government of the Union, and the executive power expressly vested in the President.

And, therefore, that the power of dismissing such a criminal agent is strictly within the limits of the authority constitutionally delegated to the President.

But Mr. GENET does not allow the National Government so

much as a right originally to *complain* of an infraction of the laws by a French Vice-Consul. He insists upon investing their right exclusively in the Legislature of the state where the offence was committed: and with imperious arrogance calls upon the President to procure an examination of DUPLAINE's conduct by the Legislature of Massachusetts. Let us therefore candidly enquire, whether this measure which he so confidently demands, be really consistent with the laws and constitutions which guard the liberties and secure the happiness of the American people.[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

DEAR SIR: QUINCY, January 5, 1794.

I must apologize for not having answered before this your last letter, but your conjectures with respect to *Columbus* were not without foundation, and what with politics and law, what with public and private discussion, I have scarcely had a moment that I could call my own to perform my duties to you. *Columbus* has been attacked in the *Chronicle* by a writer under the signature of *Americanus*, and defended by another subscribing himself *Barneveld*.[2] *Columbus* and

[1] The fourth communication appeared in the *Columbian Centinel*, December 18, 1793, and was confined to the point outlined above. The letters were widely copied and called out many replies. "The President, however, with the unanimous concurrence of the four officers of state, has formed the same judgment with Columbus, and I hear no members of Congress who profess to differ from them." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, December 14, 1793. Ms. "I have read all the numbers with attention, and consider them a valuable present to the public, tending to place in a true and just point of view the conduct of a man who has disgraced his office, and made himself so obnoxious as scarcely to be entitled to common decency. Partisans may rail, but sound reason will enlighten and prevail." *Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams*, December 30, 1793. Ms.

[2] The letters of "Americanus" were printed in the *Independent Chronicle*, beginning December 19; those of "Barneveld," in the same paper, beginning December 26. Both series ran into January, 1794. Mrs. Adams wrote on January 12: "I know of but one title which Americanus has to respect, and that is what nature could not withhold from him — age."

Barneveld we are told are one and the same person, and the discussion is therefore still protracted, though I hope it will soon be closed.

The public here have been sufficiently favorable to *Columbus*. The applause which from many different quarters has been bestowed upon his letters in private conversations has been so much superior to their merits, that I dare not repeat the observations which have been reported to me lest you should suspect the author of vanity beyond the limits of common extravagance. In one of the last *Centinels* there is a sonnet to the writer of Columbus which you will probably have seen before this reaches you, and by which you will perceive that even the Muses have promised him the wreath of glory to entwine his brows. On the other hand the saturnine genius of the *Chronicle* has devoted to ineffable contempt the "*petulance* and *affected* wit of Columbus and Barneveld, most of which (he says) is A SORT *of literary plagiarism* from Junius"; they are called the "*aspirations of family pride*," and the "*Juvenile author*" is assured that he will not be rescued from contempt even by the "*high station* of his sire."

You will not suspect me to be much affected by criticisms like this. But there is one symptom calculated above all others to congeal every source of future exertion. It is the manner with which these publications are received by some of *my friends*, and by many others, who would be clamorous enough in praise of the sentiments, if they were not disposed to check the *aspirations* of the writer. The public is a lady having so many admirers, that a favor is not to be obtained from her by one of them with impunity. And even when the favor desired is nothing more than a simple smile of approbation, she cannot grant it without exciting all the evil energies of those whose ardor aims at much more familiar caresses.

Yet I cannot write for the common purposes of ambition. I cannot wish to be the rival of any candidate for public office of any kind. My first and certainly at present my only object is to run with honor and reputation the career of my profession, and whenever I have joined in the public discussion of political questions it has certainly been from motives more patriotic than personal. My country is entitled to my services however small their value may be, and if she will but approve I shall not ask her to reward them.

The state of our public affairs assumes an appearance not only critical but alarming. Yet I cannot think our greatest danger to be apprehended from external enemies. They may distress us, but we can be ruined only by ourselves. We shall soon have no friends on this side heaven, and we shall have none but enemies there, unless we heal in some measure our internal divisions. To conciliate and unite appears to me at the present moment more than ever the interest and duty of every American. With respect to Genet and his frenzies, the object is in some measure accomplished. But the prime agent to produce this effect has been his own folly. I wish that the wisdom of others may extend the principle of reconciliation to the other important interests of the country.

The winter vacation has given me some considerable respite from the forms of attending upon courts; but our Common Pleas commence their session this week, and for the future three months my attention will again be directed to *my own* concerns. No man I find can serve two masters, and my professional studies have been somewhat neglected while I have been perplexing myself with the affairs of the nation. The Attorney General [1] is now at home, so that I shall of course be superseded in my official ministration at

[1] Sullivan.

the sessions. He looks at me with less complacency than ever, and is said to be the writer of *Americanus*. He intends, it is said, to stand as candidate for Governor, and I have some curiosity to see how he will manage his card so as to keep upon terms with the prophet Samuel[1] and his party. Both Jacobins, both Frenchmen, both pretending to be the slavish adorers of our sovereign lords the people. It is however conjectured by some that Sullivan will crouch and accommodate by taking the second station. This would certainly be his best policy, and would probably unite a strong party in his favor. The oldest head will no doubt wear the tiara, but his ambition will perhaps not be contented with a place, which would deprive him of his present office, which is doubly lucrative, and perhaps tie up his tongue at the bar. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, March 2, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

You will doubtless hear before this reaches you the event of a town meeting which was called here lately[2] for the purpose of helping forward Mr. Madison's resolutions,[3] and of

[1] Samuel Adams.

[2] February 24, 1794. See *Columbian Centinel*, February 26, 1794, and *Independent Chronicle*, February 27, for the two interpretations of the proceedings.

[3] These resolutions were intended to place the commerce of the United States upon a better footing by imposing heavier duties upon the goods and vessels of nations having no commercial treaties with the United States and reducing existing duties upon the manufactures and shipping of those having treaties. They were printed in *Annals of Congress*, 3d Cong. 155, and in *Writings of James Madison* (Hunt), VI. 203. Aimed against Great Britain because of seizures of American merchantmen in the West Indies, they sought to protect the rights of American citizens from violation in any quarter. They aroused much party feeling, and Madison felt the criticisms and abuse directed against himself and the resolutions from

intimidating our representatives who opposed them. After great [exertions] had been made to raise a Committee ready for everything, [and the] Committee had reported a number of resolves to answer [their purp]oses, a very decided majority of a crowded town meeting voted to adjourn without day, and did not even hear a discussion of the resolves. The lurking serpent was perceived and avoided. The commercial part of the town were almost unanimous, and the aversion to any measures which might be productive of war appeared very decidedly to be the prevailing sentiment with the citizens of every description. The Jacobins were completely discomfited, and will have the mortification to find their intended poison operate as an invigorating cordial.

The arrival of the new Minister from France and recall of Genet is another circumstance of mortification to the same party.[1] They are not yet sure that Mr. Fauchet will imitate his predecessor by connecting himself and his country with a desperate faction intent upon the ruin of our own government; and while that remains an uncertainty, they feel extremely fearful of losing their main support. I hope however that the new plenipotentiary will pursue a different system, and that we shall still be permitted to remain at peace.

Our Supreme Court has been sitting about a fortnight. Without being overburdened with business I have on my hands sufficient to employ almost all my time, and to keep

the Eastern States. Of this meeting he wrote to Jefferson: "It appears, however, that in spite of all these diabolical manœuvres, the town of Boston has been so far awakened as to have a meeting in the town-house, and a pretty unanimous vote for a committee to consider the subject, and report proper instructions for their member in Congress. The Committee consists of men of weight, and, for the most part, of men of the right sort. There are some, however, who will endeavour to give a wrong turn to the business." *Writings of James Madison* (Rives), II. 2.

[1] Fauchet's instructions were dated November 15, 1793, and he was received February 22, 1794. His despatches are in *Correspondence of the French Ministers* (Turner).

upon my mind a continual anxiety which unfits me for anything else. This will be my excuse for having so long neglected to write you.

Since the contest between *Americanus* and *Barneveld*, the reputed author of the former has treated me with an unusual degree of civility. He has even in one or two causes of considerable consequence advised his clients to engage me. I know the man, and shall have as little dependance upon his kindness as I have fear of his resentment. I know he will never injure me while I keep myself out of the reach of his malice. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, March 24, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

. . . The depredations committed upon the commerce of this country have considerably distressed and still more alarmed our merchants, and if the principle upon which the British have lately proceeded to seize our ships be persisted in, I fear we shall have no alternative but war; indeed it is of itself a state of war to have everything that passes under the denomination of supplies liable to capture.[1]

[1] On November 6, 1793, "additional instructions" were issued to all British ships of war and privateers with letters of marque against France, to take all ships "laden with goods the produce of any colony belonging to France, or carrying provisions or other supplies for the use of any such colony," and bring ships and cargoes to legal adjudication in British courts of admiralty. The English minister (Grenville) afterwards explained that the order was of a temporary character, to prevent abuses that might take place in consequence of the whole Santo Domingo fleet having gone to the United States, and because of an intended attack upon the French West Indie islands by a British fleet. *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 430.

"The merchants, particularly of New England, have had a terrible slam in the West Indies. About a hundred vessels have been seized by the British for condemnation on the pretext of enforcing the laws of the monarchy with regard to

The aversion of our people to war is however constantly strengthening, and has of late upon several occasions appeared in a very decided manner. The event of our town meeting exhibited very forcibly the public sentiment here; a still later occasion has shown the prevalence of the same sentiments.

An attempt was last week made to celebrate the late successes of the French by a second civic festival. It was set on foot by the Jacobin-antifederal faction, and they appointed a Committee who applied to the Lieutenant Governor to order out the military and to make a display in behalf of the Commonwealth. He at first complied with their request, ordered out an artillery company, and directed that they should be supplied with one hundred cartridges at the expense of the State, that is, from the public magazines;[1] but what with squibs upon the subject in the newspapers, and with serious expostulations from some respectable gentlemen who got intimidated, one despicable passion rescued him from the disgrace which another was bringing upon him, and he countermanded his orders. The civic festival is postponed and we shall hear no more of it until some new accident shall give another clue to those who set it on foot.[2]

the colony trade. The partisans of England, considering a war as now probable, are endeavoring to take the lead in defensive preparations, and to acquire merit with the people by anticipating their wishes." *Madison to Jefferson*, March 12, 1794. *Writings of James Madison* (Rives), II. 6. A proposal for an embargo was at first negatived, chiefly by northern votes; but in the face of further losses in the West Indies, and the clamors of the eastern shipowners it passed the House by a large majority, March 25, and became a law.

[1] "A feast is to be had in this town to celebrate the victories of the French. The Lt. Governor [Samuel Adams], we hear, has ordered that the collation shall be served in the Senate chamber; and that a military corps shall parade in honor of the day." *Gore to King*, March 19, 1794. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 555.

[2] See *Independent Chronicle*, March 20 and 24.

The old gentleman has hurt himself by this improper compliance with an insolent request. The general opinion seems to be that there will be no choice of a governor by the people at our ensuing election. It is my opinion however that Mr. Adams will be chosen. He may do less harm than some others, but he will certainly never do any good. *Stat magni nominis umbra.* His present impotence leans for support on his former services, and the office will be given him as a reward, not as an employment. I am, etc.[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, April 12, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

I received this morning your favor of the 3d instant. We still hold tolerably firm to the text of neutrality, though we have our partialities for the French, and are much irritated against the British. This is natural enough, and indeed, although we have some grounds of complaint against both with respect to their treatment of our commerce in their present contest, yet it is not to be denied that the general disposition of the French ruling powers has been constantly favorable to us, and that the British government, acrimonious, jealous and under the guise of fair pretensions, deeply malignant. The new instructions of the 8th of January have an appearance less hostile than those under which most of our vessels in the West Indies have been condemned,

[1] "At the second Town meeting I am informed you came forward and acquired much honor, as the business eventually redounded to the honor of the town of Boston. I was pleased that you had signalized yourself. I see very plainly whither your bark is tending. In vain you may cry, *Quo me rapit tempestas!* it must be so. You must be your father's own son, notwithstanding the rocks he has pointed out to you." *Charles Adams to John Quincy Adams*, New York, April 10, 1794. Ms.

and if we can labor through another summer without a war, I hope the affairs of Europe will assume a milder aspect.[1] The unprecedented exertions which have convulsed that quarter of the globe are surely too violent for duration. The combined powers have made so little impression upon France, and have already suffered so severely, that I think they cannot hold out much longer. They must, I think, patch up a peace upon such terms as they can; but how they can exist under their present governments, or any other, with a nation of fanatical atheists, all warriors, in the midst of them, is indeed a problem which nothing but time can solve.

Our election of Governor took place last Monday. The numerous candidates of whom everybody talked, and for whom nobody intended to vote, had silently sunk into oblivion, and Judge Cushing alone remained to be opposed to the claimant *by succession*.[2] In this town uncommon pains

[1] This order will be found in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 431. Lord Grenville explained to Pinckney that the new order was issued to show the sincere desire of the administration to maintain the best understanding and harmony with the United States, and to remove the pretext "from evil disposed persons" in the United States who were endeavoring to irritate the people against Great Britain and opposing the measures of their government.

"The later accounts from the West Indies since the new instruction of January 8 are rather favorable to the merchants, and alleviate their resentments; so that Great Britain seems to have derived from the excess of her aggressions a title to commit them in a less degree with impunity." *Madison to Jefferson*, April 28, 1794. *Writings of James Madison* (Rives), II. 10.

The serious situation in the relations between the United States and Great Britain gave occasion to a special mission to England, John Jay being named as the special envoy. Washington had considered John Adams for the place, but Robert Morris objected, for a reason not stated. See King's memoranda on the origin of this mission in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 517.

[2] Gore had written to King in December: "The federalists talk of running Judge Cushing for governor, and there is some probability that he may be elected. Such an event is very desirable. It would make Massachusetts completely federalist." *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 511.

were taken by both parties. There were 500 votes more than have ever been given upon any former election. Mr. Adams had 1400, and Judge Cushing 900. Our federalists droop the head and think all is lost. They know not so much of the human heart, or of the American character as you do. You told me what the event of the election would be last October, and I then thought your "oracle plus sûr que celui de Chalcas." A friend of mine who lives in the country, by the name of Townsend,[1] a sensible man and a warm Federalist, has repeatedly told me previous to the election, that he did not think the prophet would even have votes enough to make him a candidate for the election. Why? Because he is superannuated and antifederal. I have so often told him that I believed the choice of the people would be for this doting antifederalist. Since the election he writes me "I give you joy of the prospect of your old friend's being elected Governor. The votes went very different from what I expected. *I was not sufficiently acquainted with the moral habits of the people.* The main argument of his being a scapegoat of seventy-five had more weight than I had expected." There will probably be no choice of Lieutenant Governor by the people. Mr. Adams's partisans in this town voted for Mr. Gill. He will probably be the highest candidate.

My business I can hope will increase. But as it is I have no disposition to complain. It gives me bread and I find myself so well satisfied with that, that my greatest apprehension is of growing indolent and listless. It is hardly possible to obtain a conquest over the ambitious principle without subduing in some measure that of an honorable activity. You recommend to me to attend the town meet-

[1] Horatio Townsend (1763–1826), a fellow-student with Adams in Judge Parsons' office. See *Life in a New England Town*, 30 *n*.

ings and make speeches; to meet with caucuses and join political clubs. But I am afraid of all these things. They might make me a better politician, and give me an earlier chance of appearing as a public man; but that would throw me completely in the power of the people, and all my future life would be a life of dependence. I had rather continue some time longer in obscurity, and make some provision for fortune, before I sally out in quest of fame or of public honors. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BOSTON, April 22, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

I received last week your favor containing the quotations upon the subject of sequestering debts.[1] I have not Rutherford, and know not whether it is owned in this town. But I have looked into Grotius, who gives the same opinion with Puffendorf as to the debt from the Thessalians to the Thebans which Alexander forgave. But their reasoning upon that case seems founded principally but not altogether upon the *right of conquest*, and admits but of a partial application to the propositions of the present time. There is in Grotius something more pointed to the state of our question. He says: "A king has a greater right in the goods of his subjects for the public advantage than the proprietors them-

[1] "The old debtors to British subjects, united with the over zealous friends of France and the Democratical Societies of our principal cities, are urging a sequestration of things in action: and as I know you are not inattentive to any question of public law, I have enclosed you some minutes of authorities, and I wish you to look into all others relative to the subject." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, Philadelphia, April 5, 1794. Ms.

On March 27 Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey, introduced a resolution to sequester all debts due from citizens of the United States to British subjects, the proceeds to be used to indemnify all who had suffered from British violations of the rights of neutrality and of the Law of Nations.

selves. And when the exigencies of the state require a supply, every man is more obliged to contribute towards it than to satisfy his creditors." Grotius I. 1. 6. Barbeyrac's note upon this passage is: "And consequently the sovereign may discharge a debtor from the obligation of paying either for a certain time or forever, if the public good requires it." He gives an example from the Roman history after the battle of Cannæ.

These observations however seem to be confined to the debts due from one subject to another, and the influence of an act done at an epoch so calamitous cannot be cited as a fair precedent upon occasions when the common laws and the natural obligations of justice are not superseded by extreme necessity.

That the sequestration of British debts must be considered as a direct act of hostility cannot I think admit of a doubt. But the instructions of the 6th of November were a direct act of hostility on their part. After the recapture of Toulon they did, it is true, pretend to explain them away and repealed them. But in the meantime the depredations committed upon our commerce by their privateers and West India judges, under color of those orders, have been enormous, and such as a free and spirited people cannot tolerate. It is not surprising that the commercial part of the community have been so much exasperated, or that propositions so rash and intemperate have met with so much countenance in the national counsels.

There is indeed something so fraudulent in the aspect of the proposals that the measure, if adopted, must be very disgraceful to the nation. It is a dishonorable resentment which would afford a gratification to our enemies, because it would make us accessary to our own infamy, the instruments of our own shame. It is a rod which can only tickle

our adversaries, but which may be turned into a deadly scourge upon ourselves. It is an expedient suggested by our passion to our weakness, and which nothing but our real impotence can in any degree extenuate. Yet what else can we do? If they will assail us as highway robbers, we must pilfer from them as pickpockets. We cannot fight, and therefore we must cheat them. This appears to me to be the real state of the argument, and all that can be said in favor of the sequestration.

Since writing the above I received your favor of the 12th. I have read the case to which you refer in the *Collectanea Juridica*, but I do not find that Magens is owned here. The question at that time was in many respects different from ours, and the seizure of the debt, or rather its detention by the King of Prussia, less warrantable than a sequestration would be as now proposed. His cause of complaint was incomparably less than ours. It does not appear that any violation of the laws of nations had been committed.[1] Certainly, nothing so flagrant as the instructions of the 6th of November. All the condemnations had been upon the real grounds either of enemy's goods or contraband trade. Then the debt was the King's. His faith had been pledged for its payment. Circumstances rendered it a debt of peculiar and more than ordinary obligation upon him to discharge. All these points are dwelt upon in the report of the King of England's law officers, and very few of their arguments could now be applied against the measure on our part.

[1] In 1752 the King of Prussia, as an act of reprisal, stopped the payment of interest due by him to English creditors on the Silesian loan. Such a measure, almost unprecedented in modern times, called out a memorial from the British government, prepared by Sir George Lee, Dr. Paul, Sir Dudley Ryder, and Mr. Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield. It has generally been commended by publicists, and was characterized by Vattel as "an excellent *morceau de droit des gens*." *Collectanea Juridica*, I. 154.

I have not met with an instance of reprisals upon debts in the course of the present century. I am, etc.

TO JOHN ADAMS

DEAR SIR: BOSTON, May 26th, 1794.

Mr. [Ebenezer] Dorr obtained a passage in the vessel with Mr. Jay, and Mr. [Edward] Jones had an opportunity to go from Newport, so that they had no occasion to make the application to Congress in behalf of which I requested your favor.[1]

I drew another petition some time since for the manufacturers of snuff and tobacco in this town, making representations against the tax proposed upon those articles. I know not whether you have seen this petition, or in what light it appeared if you did. In the House of Representatives I believe it was not read, and the tax I understand has passed. I was somewhat puzzled for reasons to suggest against it.

The session of Congress I presume is approaching to a close. The prospects of immediate war appear to blow over. Whether we shall be able to make any terms of accommodation with Great Britain and obtain proper satisfaction for her insolence and violence, is still very questionable, but it is of infinite importance that we should preserve peace, until war shall become a duty.

It is therefore fortunate for the country that the passionate measures which have been proposed were all defeated. That for the suspension of intercourse with Great Britain was one of the most important of them. Your decision of that question probably gave the tone to our affairs for one

[1] They were merchants of Boston who desired to obtain leave to send a small vessel in ballast to some port in Europe to secure their property. The embargo prevented all communication with Europe.

season further. The fate of this country depended upon that vote.[1] I expected it would have renewed the abusive system which was for some time so rancorously pursued, but which for some time past has drooped away. But very little has been said upon the subject, and I have not seen a single speculation in the prints upon it.

The cessation of the embargo is offensive to our Jacobins, who are reduced to the argument, that either the Congress were precipitate in laying it on, or imprudent in taking it off.[2] I have silenced some of them by avowing the former as my opinion.

[1] Abraham Clarke, of New Jersey, had introduced a resolution, April 5, for suspending all commercial communication with Great Britain. It passed the House, but was lost in the Senate by the casting vote of the Vice-President — John Adams.

[2] See McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II. 173, 174. The embargo was raised May 25. "The Secretary of State called upon me this morning to inform me by order of the President, that it was determined to nominate you to go to Holland as Resident Minister. The President desired to know if I thought you would accept. I answered that I had no authority from you, but it was my opinion that you would accept, and that it would be my advice that you should. . . . Your knowledge of Dutch and French, your education in that country, your acquaintance with my old friends there, will give you advantages beyond many others. It will require all your prudence and all your other virtues as well as all your talents. . . . Be secret. Don't open your mouth to any human being on the subject except your mother. Go and see with how little wisdom this world is governed." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, Philadelphia, May 26, 1794. Ms.

"The nomination, which is the result of the President's own observations and reflections, is as politic, as it is unexpected. It will be a proof that sound principles in morals and government are cherished by the executive of the United States, and that study, science and literature are recommendations which will not be overlooked. It will, or at least it ought to have in England and Holland more effect than any thing that has been done, except perhaps the appointment of Mr. Jay. It is a pledge given by the American cabinet, that they are not enemies to a rational form of government, and that they are not hurried away by a wild enthusiasm for every unmeaning cry of Liberty, Republicanism and Equality." *Ibid.*, May 29, 1794. Ms. The nomination was laid before the Senate May 29, and confirmed on the following day.

You have seen the operation of democratic clubs in this town by the dismission of Mr. Jones and the election of Mr. Morton as representative.[1] Morton has of late been a violent sans-culotte, and *faction* covers at least as great a multitude of sins as *charity*.

The opposite party have not so much industry and have not the advantage of an organized system. Otis had about 200 votes but did not obtain his election. Jarvis was formerly his warm political friend, and probably viewed him as a disciple of his own; but finding him intractable and rather falling into the other scales, he has forsaken him, and of course carried off a powerful interest. Jarvis's *electioneering* influence in this town is very great. . . .

COMMISSION TO THE NETHERLANDS[2]

GEORGE WASHINGTON,
President of the United States of America

To John Quincy Adams. — Greeting.

Reposing especial trust and confidence in your integrity, prudence and ability, I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, do appoint you the said JOHN QUINCY ADAMS Minister Resident for the United States of America with their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Netherlands, authorizing you hereby to do and perform all such matters and things as to the said place or office doth appertain, or as may be duly given you in charge hereafter, and the said office to hold and exercise during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being. IN TESTIMONY whereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand at the City of Philadelphia the thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and ninety four,

[1] Perez Morton succeeded John Coffin Jones.

[2] Adams succeeded to William Short, at this time at the Court of Madrid.

and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighteenth.

GEO. WASHINGTON.

By the President of the United States of America,
(SEAL) EDMUND RANDOLPH, *Secretary of State.*

TO JOHN ADAMS

PHILADELPHIA, July 10, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

I arrived here last evening, and this morning paid my respects to the Secretary of State, who introduced me to the President. I find that it is their wish that I should be as expeditious in my departure as possible. I told the Secretary that the state of my own affairs would render my return to Boston previous to my departure extremely eligible to myself. He inquired whether it would be *indispensable*. I replied that in my present situation I could view nothing as *indispensable* that could relate to my own affairs, and if the public service required it, I should be prepared to go from hence or from New York. He has allotted me *about ten days* to spend in his office in obtaining the necessary information, and I *expect* it will be required of me to proceed immediately after from hence or from New York. Of this however I am not yet certain. I shall write you again as soon as I shall have any foundation for certainty upon the subject. . . .[1]

[1] He occupied his time in reading such material bearing upon his mission as was in the Department of State, and found opportunity to examine the six volumes of his father's despatches to the Continental Congress while he was their commissioner and minister in Europe. They proved, he wrote, "such a fund of information and of entertainment to me as I have seldom met with in the course of my life." Finding that the law allowed him a secretary of legation, he offered the place to his brother, Thomas Boylston Adams, who, after some hesitation, accepted the appointment.

TO JOHN ADAMS

PHILADELPHIA, July 27th, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

I expected to have been on my way to Boston before this, but Mr. Hamilton is gone into the country, and I cannot be supplied with my instructions until he returns. He has been expected every hour these four days, and it is very possible that four days hence he may still be hourly expected. In the meanwhile I am here lolling away my time, and sweating away my person, with nothing to do and waiting with as much patience as I have at command. I am unable to say, therefore, when I shall leave this place, but hope it will be by the middle of this week.

But I presume that my instructions after all will contain nothing very particular. The Secretary of State says that the mission is almost exclusively reduced to a pecuniary negotiation.

To have nothing further to do but to borrow money and superintend the loans already existing, is an employment to which for a certain time I have no reluctance in submitting. It is a situation in which my services may be of some small utility to my country, and which may afford me a valuable opportunity to improve my information and talents; but I cannot think of it with any satisfaction as a permanency, whether I consider it with reference to the public or to myself.

As it respects the public, it is a situation of small trust and confidence under the present circumstances. The credit of the United States stands upon such ground that very little or none of their future success or failure will depend upon the personal character or abilities of their representative there. And I presume the executive government

of this country will not think it necessary to keep a Minister constantly resident at the Hague for the sole purpose of occasionally borrowing a sum of money for the public at Amsterdam.

Should that however be the policy of the government, and should it be at my option to continue from year to year in this state of nominal respectability and real insignificance, it is proper for me to determine how long I shall bear it. And this is a subject of much reflection and much anxiety to my mind.[1]

I have abandoned the profession upon which I have hitherto depended for a future subsistence. Abandoned it at a time when the tedious novitiate of hope and fear was nearly past; when flattering and brightening prospects were every day opening more and more extensively to my view; when I was at least upon a footing of equal advantage with any one of my own standing in the profession, and advancing if not rapidly at least with regular progression towards eminence; when the reward of long and painful expectation began to unfold itself to my sight and give me a rational hope of future possession. At this critical moment, when all the materials for a valuable reputation at the bar were collected and had just begun to operate favorably for me, I have stopped short in my career, forsaken the path which would have led me to independence and security in private life, and stepped into a totally different direction.

To that profession I can never return without losing many of the advantages which rendered its practice tolerable. The

[1] "Some principle I must determine upon before I go; for my commission is *during the pleasure of the President.* It is a tenancy at will, and therefore it is proper that I should settle beforehand the contingencies upon which *my will* shall determine, upon the supposition that the President should not make such determination on my part unnecessary. I wish to serve my country, but not to feed upon her for nothing." *To John Adams*, July 20, 1794. Ms.

reputation which hitherto I had acquired was still very much confined and limited; it was founded upon four years of constant application and attention to business. My absence will not only stop its growth, but will carry me back to that obscurity in which I began. The study of the common and statute law has nothing attractive to secure any attention to it unless some inducement of immediate interest serves as a stimulus. My business and my studies in the character which I am now to assume have very little affinity with those of a practising lawyer. I shall probably have but little leisure, and shall not be disposed to devote it to Kings Bench or Chancery Reports, to Littleton's *Tenures* or Coke's *Commentaries*. Yet these studies must essentially be uninterrupted to preserve the learning of a lawyer, and two or three years' intermission will have the double effect of disgusting me with them, and of disqualifying me from the practise of the law without a redoubled application to them.

In proportion as my own professional advancement will be checked that of my contemporaries, and particularly of those who started from the goal nearly at the same time with myself, will be promoted. They will continue to make their way, and will in a few years have reached the summit of reputation and of business. My juniors who are now just opening their offices, or are yet students, will then have reached the station from which I have departed, and thus after having been elevated to a public station much beyond my own wishes and expectations, and invested with a character more conspicuous than those of my fellow citizens of equal years and standing in the world, in returning to the bar I shall descend as much below the level of my ambition and pretensions as I have been by my present appointment raised above it.

The profession, therefore, can be considered by me in no other light than that of a last resort, in case all other resources should fail; and yet I have no reason to suppose that anything more eligible will occur to me in case I should at the end of two or three years be destitute of public employment.

Unpleasant however as this perspective is, I think it infinitely preferable to that of remaining in the public service to perform duties which may be executed equally well by any other man, and with the consciousness of holding a public office without confidence, without utility, and for no other purpose than barely to give me a subsistence.

The idea of being many years absent from my country, from my family, my connections and friends, is so painful, that I feel a necessity for fixing upon some period to which I may look forward with an expectation of being restored to them. The distance between the two countries is so great and the communication of course so small, that it is hardly possible for an American to be long in Europe without losing in some measure his national character. The habits, the manners, and affections insensibly undergo an alteration, the common changes to which society is incident remove many of the friends and connections which he left behind him, and no others are substituted in their stead. His own propensities are so liable to follow the course of the stream into which he has been banished, that he gradually takes an European disposition, becomes a stranger to his own country, and, when at length he returns, finds himself an alien in the midst of his own fellow citizens.

The attachment which I feel for my native land is not merely a sentiment of the heart, it is also a principle dictated by my reason. Independent of my feelings and inclinations, I hold it to be a duty of the most rigid obligation to make the

place of my birth the centre of all my wishes, and the chief object of all my pursuits. Wherever my lot may be cast, I hope I shall always turn towards it with as much frequency of devotion and as constant veneration, as that with which the most faithful disciple of Mahomet presents his face towards the tomb of his prophet. I cannot therefore look forward with indifference to any situation that shall have a tendency to loosen the ties which connect me with my country. I cannot anticipate without concern a length of absence, which may give my inclinations a bias different from that of my duty.

For these reasons I am convinced of the propriety there is in marking out for my own determination the limits of time for the duration of my present mission. It is very possible that I may have no occasion for any such limitation, and that my commission will be superseded by the will of the President, as soon or sooner than I shall desire; but this is an event, which is wholly out of my control, and which therefore cannot enter into my calculations.

If after three years residence at the Hague I should see no particular object requiring my further continuance there; if the business of an American Minister there should continue to be the mere agency of a broker, and my office be of no benefit but to me, I shall feel myself under an obligation to return home and resume my profession, or any other employment in private life that shall afford me an honorable support.

I have written very freely to you, Sir, upon this subject, because I wish to have the sanction of your opinion and your advice. The principle which I have adopted has been so consonant to your own practice, and has been in my mind so clearly the result of your instructions, that I think it cannot but meet with your approbation. Perhaps the time upon

which I have fixed may not preserve so accurately the medium as I should wish, and if you are of that opinion, I must solicit you for the result of your reflections in writing, if it be not too inconvenient. Your kindness will excuse the unceasing egotism of this letter, which could admit of no apology, were it not directed to the indulgence of a parent, for the purpose of obtaining the guidance of paternal wisdom. . . .

INSTRUCTIONS

PHILADELPHIA, July 29th, 1794.

SIR,

Your predecessor and yourself are furnished with all the documents of form. To him have been sent letters of recall; to you have been delivered your commission and letters of credence to the Stadtholder and States-General. You are also possessed of a cypher.

Although the general history of a country, and its Constitution will necessarily attract the attention of a minister and of the government, from which he goes; yet is it not only superfluous to recommend to you the acquisition of subjects already known to you, but we can also dispense with any special communications upon them. However, if even concerning them, it should appear that the books, from which our knowledge of the United Netherlands is derived, go beyond or fall short of the truth, it will be expected, that these observations should be noted to us. If, too, the germ of any important change should be foreseen, it will be honorable to yourself, and may be advantageous to the United States to apprize us of it, as early as possible.

The *administration* indeed of the Dutch government is not only liable to the fluctuations, which the administration of every government undergoes, from the passions and views of individuals at the helm of affairs; but the peculiar situation of Holland in relation to the present European war lays it open to the chance of sudden revolutions, and very sudden and new courses of policy.

These and every other interesting occurrences will be marked with care, and forwarded to the Secretary of State. Among other things, which may be contemplated, as worthy of observation; if any symptom of increasing liberty, of dissatisfaction with any of the combined powers, or of an inclination to make peace with the French Republic should be found, you will hasten to us the intelligence of them.

It will be at least a matter of curiosity to understand, in what light the existing armed neutrality between Sweden and Denmark is considered at the Hague, after the part, which Holland took in the former system.

Notwithstanding we have ministers and consuls in other parts of Europe; yet if you should obtain any very interesting intelligence from countries not lying within your immediate functions, it will be acceptable to receive it, even with the probability of some inaccuracy. The movements of the northern French armies may continue to be in your neighborhood, and early opportunities from France being cut off, we are dependent upon British prints for the first breaking of French events.

Our treaty with Holland[1] being the basis of our commercial intercourse, you will do well to inquire into the operations of every stipulation; and as it is a great desideratum in our political archives, that we have no authentic tables of our commerce in detail with different nations, it will be an essential service to collect minute statements of it with Holland. You understand too well to be in need of an enumeration, what are the points in which foreign commerce is valuable. To these therefore you will particularly turn your mind; and if our commerce can be relieved from any burthens, or promoted by any exertions of the Executive or Legislature; you will put it in our power by proper and reasonable representations. The only thing which now occurs upon this head is, that our treaty is interpreted not to suffer American Consuls to be introduced into the Dutch Islands in our vicinity. Mr. Van Berckel the Resident of the United Netherlands here,[2]

[1] That of 1782, negotiated by John Adams.

[2] Pieter J. van Berckel.

has been called upon to explain and to rectify the wrong; but I can obtain no written answer to two letters, which I have addressed to him; the reason of which I presume from a conversation to be, that he has no authority to enter into any adjustment. You will therefore let this business be discussed; as we entertain little doubt, that Consuls of the United States ought to be admitted in all the Dutch territories.

The employment of your predecessor has hitherto consisted in the management of Loans, which belong to the Treasury Department. That therefore is the channel, through which you will receive the will of the President in the article of money.

But I must intreat and urge you, to make it your first and unremitting duty, to forward by all the means in your power the loan opened for 800,000 dollars and destined to the ransom of our fellow citizens in Algiers, and the effectuating of a peace. Our bankers in Amsterdam have been commissioned for accomplishing it, from the inevitable delay in your departure from hence. The Secretary of the Treasury, however, will lead you into those measures which may contribute to the advancement of the object.

Our Consuls in Holland and in the countries, convenient to your residence are the following: James Greenleaf, consul, and Sylvanus Bourne, vice consul, for the port of Amsterdam, John Parish, consul for Hamburgh, and Arnold Delius, consul for Bremen. They are under general instructions to correspond with you, and as soon as arrangements concerning consuls and vice consuls, which are scattered in different instructions shall be reduced into one body, a copy of them shall be transmitted to you. . . .

From you, Sir, I ask a communication by every opportunity. The Executive having been under some inconvenience on that score, it is the wish and instruction of the President, that a memorandum be daily taken of every circumstance, which may be deemed proper for his information, and a letter commenced and continued, so as to be ready for conclusion and sealing, upon a moment's warning of a conveyance. . . .

"As you have a right to correspond with the ministry of the nation, near which you reside, in your own language, you will not lose this advantage. . . .

EDM. RANDOLPH[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, October 23, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR:

On the 15th instant in the evening, twenty-eight days after our departure from Boston, we arrived in this place, and I now write you from our old station at Osborne's Hotel, in the Adelphi.

We landed at Deal[2] and came up from thence by land. The dispatches which had been delivered to me for Mr. Jay, and which were my principal inducement for coming here, were so bulky that they could not be contained in a trunk which I could bring with me in the post chaise, and therefore I had the trunk that held them lashed on before, so as to have it immediately under my eyes. It was about seven in the evening, and of course quite dark, when we reached London Bridge. About a quarter of a mile on the other side of it, I thought I heard something fall, and instantly upon

[1] In a private letter, dated August 13, Randolph wrote: "The further despatches, which I wished to send to you at New York, must be deferred for the next mail to Boston, as it is all-important that you should carry to Europe a precise account of the insurrection [in Pennsylvania]." Ms.

He returned to New York before August 12, and left for Boston by the Rhode Island packet on the morning of the 15th. Hamilton gave him the powers necessary to negotiate a loan, and from Randolph he had despatches to be delivered to Jay and Pinckney. Nearly a month passed before he could obtain a passage, and on September 15 he sailed from Boston in the *Alfred*, reaching London on the evening of October 15. It may be noted that James Monroe, appointed minister to France to succeed Gouverneur Morris, reached Paris, August 2, five days after the execution of Robespierre. Adams had met in New York, in July, Talleyrand and Beaumetz.

[2] See Adams, *Memoirs*, October 14, 1794.

looking forward found the trunk, together with another which had been put with it, were both gone. My brother instantly alighted and fortunately found the trunk of papers directly under the carriage, the other was a few yards behind, under the horses' hoofs of another carriage which followed us. We secured both in the chaise with us until we reached the house where we stopped, and upon coming to a light found that the ropes and leather straps which had held the trunks had all been cut away.

I was sufficiently aware how far the felonious ingenuity was carried on this ingenious town, and from the moment of my landing had felt a great weight of anxiety on my mind with respect to my papers. I kept, therefore, a watch as strict as possible over them, and yet I cannot but attribute it to an extraordinary degree of good fortune that in the noise and bustle of a London street in the darkness of the night, I was enabled to save the trunk which had fallen from a carriage upon the full drive over the pavements, and which in half a minute more would have been irretrievably gone.

After such an accident I could not possibly sleep with Mr. Jay's dispatches in my possession. I therefore delivered them to him myself the same evening. I found he had been two or three days confined to his chamber by rheumatic complaints, but he has now I think entirely recovered from them.

He has fully communicated to me the state of his negotiation here, and has done me the honor to consult me with respect to the treaty now in discussion between him and the Ministry here. It has been brought so nearly to a termination that I presume it will within three months be laid before the Senate for consideration. The terms are such as will not suit many people in America, and yet the stipulations on our part appear to me to be no more than honor and

honesty dictate, and the satisfaction to be made by them *almost* as much (setting aside the further delay as to the delivery of the posts, I should say quite as much) as we are fairly entitled to *require*. The national honor will be maintained, the national interest will suffer infinitely less than it would by the most successful war we could wage; and is it in the heart of an American to derive an objection from the consideration that by this treaty the national justice will be fully complied with and performed?

I have not supposed myself competent to form a proper judgment upon a subject of this magnitude without longer time and more extensive information than I have been able to command. When Mr. Jay, therefore, condescended to take my opinion, I told him that as to the whole project, I felt myself inadequate to the decision from my own mind, and I could but assent to the idea in which he and Mr. Pinckney concurred, *that it was better than War*. As to the several articles they were freely canvassed by those two gentlemen for three days, during which I was present at their interviews, and suggested such ideas as occurred to me upon the subject. My observations were made with the diffidence which naturally arose from my situation, and were treated with all the attention that I would expect or desire.[1]

Upon the first occasion on which, as the servant of my country, I have been called to think and to speak, I am desirous to give you a full account of the manner in which I have conducted. Young as I am and unused to the station in which I am placed, my only hope is that the indiscretions of my novitiate may be few and unimportant. The confidence reposed in me by Mr. Jay on this occasion has been flattering in the highest degree, and I hope he will have no occasion to regret it. His kindness and civilities to my

[1] He gives his views at length in *Memoirs*, October 22, 1794.

brother and me since our arrival, have been fully correspondent to the friendship which has so long subsisted between him and you, and to the benevolence which I have always experienced from him. We are also indebted to Mr. Pinckney for every possible attention and civility since our arrival. He has lately had the misfortune of losing his lady.

When I asked you before I left America what I should do, if upon my arrival in Europe I should find no States General and no Stadtholder,[1] the circumstance was nearer to the eventual fact than I expected. The successes of the French armies in every quarter have exceeded all the powers of calculation; they are in full possession at this moment of all Flanders and Brabant; they are besieging Nimeguen and Maestricht and it is admitted on all hands that nothing remains but a general inundation to keep them out of Amsterdam. Against this measure there appears to be a formidable opposition on the part of the people. The patriotic party are again emerging from the silence of despair, and one or two of the Provinces have already declared for negotiating a separate peace.

At Amsterdam a petition, said to be signed by nine thousand persons, was lately presented to the magistrates in session, against the admission of their allied troops into the city and against the inundation. Mr. Van Staphorst[2] and Mr. Visscher[3] were two of the three deputies from the people who presented the petition. It was delivered in defiance of a law against petitions in times of danger, and I am informed that Mr. Van Staphorst is imprisoned in consequence of this procedure. Troops of cavalry have been introduced into the city and parade the streets. Can-

[1] William V, who married Frederica Sophia Wilhelmina (1747–1820), niece of Frederick the Great, and daughter of Prince August of Prussia.

[2] Nicholas van Staphorst. [3] Charles Visscher.

non are placed at the Stadthouse, and attended with lighted matches, and the Stadtholder has declared, that any man who shall discover the smallest sign of opposition to the regular authority shall be punished with instant death.

In this convulsive situation between the army of an invading enemy and those of allies equally terrible, the people in the Province of Holland are at this moment placed. The crisis cannot possibly be of long duration. The Stadtholder has been invested by the States General with a dictatorial power. His measures probably will be to receive the army of the Duke of York into Amsterdam, and to lay the country under water. But the decided inclination of a great majority of the people being opposed to this step, it becomes a question whether it will be practicable and upon the issue of the question the fate of the Netherlands is suspended.

The King of Prussia negotiates a separate peace; Spain and Sardinia in all probability *must* do the same; and the Emperor is so thoroughly exhausted that he is almost wholly disabled from continuing the war with any vigor. At the opening of the campaign Britain and France, the Rome and Carthage of modern times, will perhaps remain alone to terminate the present contest.

You have long before this heard of the catastrophe of Robespierre in France, and of the pretence upon which he suffered.[1] Since that time a party styling themselves the Moderates have hitherto maintained their ascendency in Paris and in the Convention. They all join in loading the memory of Robespierre with every possible execration, and have transferred to him the appellation of *the Tyrant*, which had before been appropriated to the late King. The horrible cruelty which has been so destructive at Lyons, in la Vendée,

[1] Robespierre was beheaded July 28 (10 Thermidor).

and in every part of the Republic; the sinking of thousands of boat loads in the Loire; the shooting of thousands by pairs at Lyons and elsewhere, the murdering of thousands under the forms of law by the guillotine, all is heaped upon Robespierre, with as much apparent detestation as every friend to humanity has really felt at these transactions. A system of moderation has been pursued by the present ruling party. Very few have suffered by the guillotine. The commissioners in the several Departments have conducted themselves with lenity and endeavored to soothe and conciliate. Great numbers have been liberated from prison. The Convention has ordered that those remaining under arrest shall be immediately tried or discharged; the disposition for mercy seems even extending to the wretched emigrants themselves, and though always excepted from the terms of capitulation granted to the several garrisons taken by the French troops, yet in one or two late instances they have not been put to immediate death.[1]

But the violent party are far from being crushed. In the Convention it still struggles, and by the Jacobins and most of the popular Societies it is still supported. A rupture between the Convention and the Jacobins has widened so much that it must before long come to a crisis. Such is the succession of anarchical factions which alternately bear sway in the center, while at the borders all the armies of the Republic, with a combination of order and enthusiasm, of severe discipline and irresistible impetuosity, pass from victory to victory, and have almost laid the whole alliance of their enemies prostrate at the feet of the Convention.

Britain however yet retains every appearance of contin-

[1] The situation of parties after the death of Robespierre is given in *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 378.

ued hostility, and although the most determined partisans of the ministry venture to sigh openly for peace, yet no man of any description appears to expect it. The war to every outward appearance is still popular, and the administration since the Duke of Portland's admission to it is said to be strong beyond all former example.

But the reins of government have been drawn so tight here that it would not be surprising if they should break. Thirteen persons are to be tried for high treason the next week. You will probably see in some of the late papers the indictment upon which they have this day (October 25) been arraigned. The trials are expected to take up a month and there is much more agitation in the public mind upon the subject than appears. Loyalty at this moment is strong and yet it is in terror. Opposition gnashes its teeth, but is silent or joins in the general cry. Suspicion, jealousy and a want of mutual confidence, betray themselves in the conduct and conversation of every one. These things are not heard, they are not seen, they can only be felt. In short the present state of society in this land of freedom has almost every mark of a severe despotism. But it is certainly an unnatural state of temper to this people and it cannot continue long. A gentleman [1] conversing with me yesterday upon the approaching trials said, "The treason is violently constructive, but it will do for this time. I expect the prisoners will be found guilty. Hampden was found guilty, so were Russell and Sidney, so was Sacheverell, *but it was remembered afterwards.*" I have heard nothing like this *said* by any Englishman (the gentleman I speak of is an American), but I have seen many who I believe *think* as much or more.

[1] Edmund Jennings. The conversation is given in greater detail in Adams, *Memoirs*, I. 53.

As to the war, excepting their naval successes they have only shared in the defeats of their allies, who are now all upon the point of leaving them. France will probably have the terms of peace with them all at her own disposal, and will then turn all her attention towards the sea. At this moment there is said to be a fleet of twenty-seven ships of the line at sea from Brest, about 100 leagues west of Scilly; ninety frigates have been built since the beginning of this year. They have ten thousand British seamen now prisoners in France, and they will not exchange a man of them. The deficiency of men here for the navy is of course prodigious, and even the fleet under Lord Howe is not half manned. It is however just gone to sea again, and another action, as terrible as that on the first of June,[1] may be fought before the close of the year.

But for the future in this war every advantage seems to be on the side of France. Their numbers are inexhaustible, and the loss of ten thousand men has no other effect than that of calling out myriads more. Everything that can be the subject of human possession belongs to the nation, and this maxim is most thoroughly reduced to practice. Of every species of property and of human life their prodigality exceeds the bounds of imagination itself. They have no commerce to lose. They have a most inveterate animosity against this nation, and above all they have to establish upon the sea a reputation to bear a parallel with that of their armies upon the land.

On the other hand the resources of Britain are comparatively small. They will not want money. There does not appear the smallest suspicion of a deficiency on that score, and it is everywhere agreed that at this moment the Minister might command it to any amount. But their want of

[1] The engagement between Howe and Villaret-Joyeuse.

seamen is without a remedy, and must increase greatly even by the most brilliant victories. Their commerce suffers severely, and the moment they lose their naval superiority must be annihilated. Strongly as they are bent upon the success of the war, and inveterate as they always are against the French, they have not that enthusiasm which in France has levelled all the boundaries of private property, and put the whole mass of physical force in the nation into the hands of the government. They contend with an enemy whom repeated defeats will not discourage, but who would be irresistible after a single victory. In short, Sir, the situation of this country, external and internal, appears to be perilous, and its prospects gloomy in the extreme.

But I have already spun my letter to an immeasurable length, and will ask for no more of your time now except to assure you that I remain, with every sentiment of duty and affection, your son.

P.S. Instead of thirteen persons to be tried for high treason I find upon further inquiry only nine; and instead of twenty-seven ships of the line now at sea from Brest, there are but fourteen. I had this last fact from an American captain who fell in with them.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 3 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, November 2d, 1794.

SIR:

I left London on the twenty-eighth ultimo, and arrived here on the 31st, at night.[1]

In the course of the present week I expect to have my

[1] He put up at the "Keyzer's Hoff," but on the 4th moved to the "Heeren Logement."

audience of the States. The Stadtholder is at Nimeguen, or with the army.

The outward aspect of this country is not that of a nation invaded by a powerful and victorious army. From Helvoetsluys to this place, a distance of about twenty of our miles, everything wears the appearance of peace and tranquility.

At Amsterdam everything is also quiet. Mr. Van Staphorst and five others of the deputation from the subscribers of the petition against the inundations, etc., have escaped and fled. Mr. Visscher and four or five more are imprisoned on the same account. Three or five thousand troops have been introduced into the city, as a check upon the dispositions of the people, and for the present the government there meets with no resistance or opposition.

But in the meantime the French armies continue to advance, and the allied armies to retreat. The Duke of York after his defeat on the 19th [October] abandoned Nimeguen, and retired to Arnheim across the Waal and the Rhine. Since then, however, the French have been repulsed with considerable loss in an attack before Nimeguen. It is confidently asserted that the Duke of Brunswick is immediately expected to take the command of the allied armies and the Duke of York is to serve under him.

As to Maestricht there is a report that it has capitulated, and another that the French have also been defeated there. Venlo has certainly capitulated.[1] The human force which the allies can at this time oppose against the progress of the French troops is not competent to answer the end, but the season is now far advanced, it becomes very rainy and unhealthy, so that possibly the armies of both parties will be obliged to go into winter quarters.

[1] Venlo capitulated October 25.

The probability that the French will penetrate to Amsterdam this season is, I think, not quite so great as it appeared to be three weeks since. And if there should be a respite of two or three months from the war, the interval will doubtless be very busily employed in negotiation.

Mr. Fagel is gone to London from hence upon a mission, the purpose of which is said to be to demonstrate to the British Ministry the absolute necessity of negotiating a peace, and to give them notice that unless they will join in it, the Hollanders must attempt it separately.[1]

On the other hand Lord Spencer and Mr. Grenville have returned from Vienna, having as is said totally failed in the object of their mission, which was to prevail upon the Emperor to continue the war with vigor for the recovery of his own dominions, and to offer him a subsidy of five millions sterling for the purpose. I suppose all this to be conjectural, for the object of those negotiations in both instances is not public.[2]

[1] Henri Fagel (1765–1838) followed William V into exile, and after 1783 was Dutch ambassador to London. George III looked upon Fagel's mission as futile, as evidence of the want of energy on the part of the Prince of Orange. The Duke of York wrote that he was in every instance thwarted by the people he was trying to save, and the combined army complained of the unkindness they experienced from the Dutch on all occasions, and the want of preparations for defence. The English government yielded to the inevitable, but advised Holland to make such a peace with France as should secure the independence of the Republic and its present constitution and form of government. *Hist. Mss. Com., Fortescue Mss.*, II. 644, 646.

[2] Lord Spencer and Thomas Grenville had been sent in July to Vienna to urge Austria to greater efforts in furnishing troops, to change her general of the army, and to concert measures for the protection of the Dutch frontier; also to ascertain what subsidy was needed to enable Austria to prosecute the war vigorously for two campaigns. The mission proved fruitless, as it was neutralized by the sending of Count de Merci from Vienna to London about the same time, where he died August 25, without accomplishing any of his objects, and Austrian jealousy of Prussia could not be overcome. A loan of six millions was demanded of the English—

What will not admit of any doubt is, that the allies, as is usual among partners that play a losing game, are dissatisfied with one another; nor is there any present appearance that their armies will cooperate with any sort of cordiality the ensuing season in case the war should continue.

Five of the Provinces here have declared for negotiating a peace separately, the other two no doubt will follow. But what kind of peace can they expect to obtain from France under the present circumstances?

The Patriotic party have no centre of union; they dare have but little communication together, and I apprehend there is no plan for their operations concerted by any considerable number of them.

From the few observations I have been able to make hitherto I imagine they have no desire of peace at present. Their animosity against the Stadtholder and the Regencies [1] is so great, that they would rather submit to the French as conquerors, than make peace with them as friends by the means of their present government. The inveteracy of the parties against each other is even greater than I expected, and if a revolution of the ruling power should take place, it is to be feared that humanity will suffer severely under the operation.

The expectation of the Patriots is, that if the French should succeed, their private property will be respected. Many of them suppose no doubt that a discrimination will be made between them and the adverse party, and as France declared war only against the Stadtholder and his adherents, the nation will fraternize with all those who were before that time and have continued to be their implacable enemies.

double what the English ministers offered. The two envoys left Vienna in October. Grenville's letters to his brother are in *Hist. Mss. Com., Fortescue Mss.*, II.

[1] Prussia and Great Britain had controlled the policy of Holland since the revolution of 1787, which reinstated the Stadtholder through their agency.

Private property has, indeed, hitherto been left untouched by the French in the places which they have conquered, and the only complaint of the people who have submitted to them has been the compulsive circulation of *assignats* in payment for whatever they purchase. Should this system be pursued, and the conquest of this country be completed, a total revolution of the government and even of the Constitution here seems to be inevitable. But whether the Provinces will be annexed to the French Republic or left to form a new government for themselves, to be in alliance with France, no person here appears to have formed an opinion whereupon to found a rational expectation.

As this event might place me in a very embarrassing situation, I am anxiously desirous of receiving eventual instructions to regulate my conduct in either of the cases which have got so far within the limits of probability.

Should this country become a dependence of the French Republic, my mission will of course be terminated by the extinction of the nation itself to which I am sent. Should it continue an independent Republic, but under a different form of government and constitution from that to which I am accredited, my functions authorized by the credentials and instructions which I now bear would, of course, be suspended.[1] It is impossible to anticipate what species of authority may rise, instead of that which has hitherto governed this people. But it will be a great relief to my own mind, and possibly may be of service to the public, if I can be prepared for either of those events I have mentioned, by knowing whether it is the pleasure of the President, that I should consider them as a termination of my Commission, and implying a permission to me to return home, or that I

[1] Adams had consulted Jay on the conduct to pursue in Holland, and the conversation is given in *Memoirs*, October 28, 1794.

should remain here and wait for his express orders, subsequent to his knowledge of these occurrences.

I have not yet received an answer from our bankers [1] to the letter which I wrote them from London and am therefore still ignorant of the fate of the loan for 800,000 dollars for which they were commissioned. I shall write them again immediately, and as soon as I have obtained my admission here intend going to Amsterdam myself. In the meantime, I remain etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 4 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, November 5, 1794.

SIR:

Yesterday I wrote a card to Mr. Van Hees, the agent of their High Mightinesses, requesting him to appoint a time when it would be convenient to him to receive a visit from me, and giving him notice of the commission and credentials which I have the honor to bear. He appointed an hour this morning, when I called accordingly, and desired him to inform me what measures I must take in order to obtain my reception. He told me the customary course was to pay a visit to the weekly president of their High Mightinesses, and deliver my credentials to him, who would on the same day communicate them to the States General, and they

[1] Willinks, Van Staphorst, and Hubbard. March 20, 1794, Congress, in making an appropriation of a million dollars for the expenses attending the intercourse of the United States with foreign nations, authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to borrow the whole or any part of the sum. In July Hamilton authorized this Amsterdam firm to negotiate in any part of Europe a loan for $800,000, that amount being deemed urgent and necessary should a certain contingency arise. Adams found that the credit of the United States stood higher than that of other powers. In December, 1794, the four per cents were quoted at ten above par, and the five's at par.

would pass a resolution to acknowledge me in the character with which I am vested. "But (added he) I must observe to you, Sir, that Mr. Short has not yet taken leave of their High Mightinesses." I told him that when Mr. Short went to Madrid it was under the expectation of returning here, but that the United States having further occasion for his services in Spain, the President had now appointed him to reside there; that I had been the bearer of his letters of recall to their High Mightinesses, and had already sent them to him, as it was judged by the American government most consistent with propriety that they should be transmitted to the States General by himself. The Agent acquiesced in this idea, and said he believed there were some precedents conformable to this mode of procedure. That I might therefore be immediately admitted and deliver Mr. Short's letters of recall, when I should receive them from him.

He said it was also customary, immediately after delivering the credentials to the weekly president, to leave a copy of them with the *Greffier;* but as he was now absent, the communication might be made to the *Commis* or clerk of their High Mightinesses. And after the acknowledgment it would be proper to give notice of it to the diplomatic characters here by visiting cards.

November 6. This morning I waited on Mr. Van Imhoff, the President for the week, and delivered to him my credentials, which he said he should not fail to communicate to their High Mightinesses this forenoon. I then went to see Mr. Lelyvelt, the *Commis* of the States, and left the copy with him, the *Greffier*, Mr. Fagel, being absent. He told me that the resolution for my acknowledgment would not be passed till tomorrow, or the day after. That their High Mightinesses received communications only in three languages, viz. the Dutch, the French and the Latin. That

as my credentials are in English, they must undergo a translation before they can be read in the Assembly, which would occasion this delay of a day or two.

November 8. Mr. Van Hees, the Agent, called and informed me that the President of the week having communicated to their High Mightinesses the letter of credence from the United States, which I had delivered to him, they had passed a resolution, the purport of which he repeated, but so rapidly and in so low a voice that I could not particularly understand it. He said the Resolution was not yet reduced to writing, but as soon as it should be, he would send it to me. The amount of it is to acknowledge me in the character conferred on me by the President, and the proceeding is no doubt according to the usual forms.[1]

November 10. I received from the Agent of their High Mightinesses the resolution relative to my reception, a copy and translation of which I inclose herewith.

November 11. You will observe by the Resolution of their High Mightinesses that an audience, either in the Assembly of the States or by Commissioners to be appointed for the purpose, is left at my election. I called this morning upon the Agent Van Hees to inquire, which of these alternatives had been chosen by my predecessor. He assured me that they were both mere formalities which were always dispensed with, except on particular and extraordinary occasions, and had been so in the case of Mr. Short. That by the transmission of this resolution my reception and acknowledgment were completed, and if I had any communication to make for the future, the person with

[1] The second paragraph of this resolution reads: "Whereupon, after deliberation it was found good and understood hereby to declare, that the said Mr. John Quincy Adams is agreeable (aangenaam) to their High Mightinesses, and that he shall be acknowledged in the aforesaid quality of minister," etc.

whom my official correspondence is to be maintained is the Greffier, and if I should have memorials to present, they are to be delivered to the weekly President.

I am fearful, Sir, that this minute detail of forms may appear tedious and perhaps trivial. But in these countries they are so much in the habit of annexing importance to accuracy in these particulars, and I have felt so much the want of information as to the mode of proceeding in this respect, that I thought it might at least save trouble upon some future occasion to have the regular process of reception transmitted to the Department over which you preside. I hope this consideration will apologize for the intrusion of a letter so very uninteresting as the present upon your perusal.[1]

I have the honor to be with sentiments of the highest respect, Sir, your humble and obedient servant.

[1] To Short he wrote, November 21, 1794: "I have been unable to obtain necessary information even upon the subject of formalities. I have been obliged, therefore, to grope in the dark as well as I could, and depend altogether upon the information of the Agent of the States. The diplomatic visits, he told me, were usually rendered *by cards*, so that I have not yet been made acquainted even with the members of that corps. The Prince's secretary is incapacited by old age, performs none of his functions, and I was necessitated to be my own introductor, to deliver my credentials to his Highness. Nothing so despicable, and nothing so indispensable as the science of forms." Three weeks later he was called upon to determine a question of form. His instructions contained the following clause: "As you have a right to correspond with the ministry of the nation near which you reside in your own language, you will not lose this advantage." Having occasion to present a memorial and a request to the High Mightinesses, he prepared them in English and delivered them in person to the President of that body. That officer in receiving them noted the fact that English was used, but said he would lay them before the States General. But Lelyveld attempted to return them to Adams on the ground that they violated a rule constantly observed by all the foreign ministers. Adams at first refused to receive them, asserting that they had already been accepted by the President, and that he could not use another language without authority from his superiors, from whom he had received his instructions. Lelyveld insisting, the matter was settled by his taking the position that the papers had never been offered, and Adams, to secure justice and avoid unnecessary dis-

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 5 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, November 7, 1794.

SIR:

By a letter, which I received since I wrote you last, I am informed that the bankers of the United States have done nothing as Commissioners for the loan of 800,000 dollars, not having received from Colonel Humphreys the notice which they were instructed to wait for previous to their acting under this commission. They add, that under the present circumstances the loan would be altogether impracticable, and they cannot foresee when it will again be feasible. Of all this they have no doubt given information to you, and to the Secretary of the Treasury.

In my letter of the 2nd instant I have mentioned the mutual dissatisfaction which has for some time prevailed among the allied powers, and I have before noticed the reports of a separate peace made by the King of Prussia. This fact seems at present to be put beyond a doubt, as the name of the minister who signed the Treaty on the part of Prussia appears in the papers of this day.

cussion, turned them into French. Randolph wrote to Adams, February 25, 1795: "You have judged right in supposing that the President could not be so tenacious of the advantage of corresponding in your own tongue, as to violate established forms. Certainly the supreme authority of a country must be submitted to in things of this kind. Nor is it expected, that you should persist in the right of using your own language *even with the ministers*, if it is likely to be unacceptable. The French minister here corresponds in French, the Spanish minister in Spanish, the Portuguese minister has been left at liberty to use the Portuguese, but practises the French, and the Dutch minister writes in French. The instruction to use your own was founded on caution; but was never considered as indispensable." The rule governing the diplomatic representatives of the United States is to employ the English language in formal written communications to the governments to which they are accredited. See Adams, *Memoirs*, IV. 327.

Spain has also sent a minister to Paris to negotiate a peace, and two ministers on the part of the Empire are employed for the same purpose, one in Switzerland, and the other is said to be now at Paris. It seems to be an opinion prevalent here, as well as in England, which I mentioned in my first letter from thence, that the French Republic will be disposed to grant moderate terms to all the allies except Great Britain, and as the system of moderation appears to be obtaining increasing ascendancy in the National Convention and throughout the Republic, the probability that England and France will be alone engaged at the opening of the ensuing campaign daily strengthens.

As to this country, it is well known to you, Sir, how close a political connection has been maintained between its government and that of Great Britain since the Revolution here in the year 1787. But a connection still closer has subsisted with Prussia, which is cemented by the ties of blood between the consorts of the Stadtholder and of the hereditary Prince of Orange,[1] and the King of Prussia, the former being his sister and the latter his daughter. Hitherto the British and Prussian influence here has been exerted in perfect union, but after this peace made by Prussia I think it it impossible they should long continue to harmonize.

The Court of St. James will no doubt be very much dissatisfied with that of Berlin, for making this peace, and a coolness between them must I think ensue. The Prussian influence here must be favorable to peace between this Republic and France, to which Great Britain cannot certainly consent.

But in the present situation of things in this country, peace has become an object of urgent necessity to the governing power here. They imagine and perhaps not without

[1] The wife of the Hereditary Prince was Frederick-Louisa-Wilhelmina, of Prussia.

foundation, that their existence depends upon their obtaining it. And for the very same reason the Patriots do not appear desirous for peace at all. *They* had rather submit to an external enemy than bear a yoke, in their minds more intolerable, of what they call internal oppression. I do not give this sentiment as that of the whole Patriotic party, who are far, very far from being united in their own politics. I cannot even pretend to say how extensive this temper may be, but from my observations hitherto, I cannot doubt but that numbers here would rather see the conquest of their country completed by the French, than a peace made by them with the government now established here.

If therefore the French Republic will consent to terms of accommodation with the Stadtholder and the States General, upon condition that they shall abandon their alliance with Great Britain, the personal interest of the House of Orange and of the members of the States will dictate to them an acquiescence in the measure. The continuance of the war threatens immediate and total destruction to them, and it is not in the power of their ally, now they are abandoned by Prussia, and are like to be deserted by the Empire, to defend them. Example is epidemical among nations, no less than among individuals, and in this instance the court of Berlin will think itself justified by the imitation, and that of the Hague deem itself authorized by the precedent.

The mission of Mr. Fagel to London is supposed to be upon this subject. But if his object is to agree upon a joint negotiation, there does not appear any possibility that this proposal will produce any effect.

The present British Ministry cannot with any consistency negotiate, and there is no present prospect of a change in the Administration. If this difficulty should be removed,

another more insurmountable would occur, if the general opinion be well founded, that the Convention will not negotiate upon any terms with Great Britain. Whether this disposition, if it really exists, will continue for any length of time, it is impossible to say. It is founded upon the extreme animosity against the British, which prevails at this time in France. But the public sentiment is in its own nature very fluctuating. National passions subside when the objects which excited them are removed. The character of the French people, however susceptible of ardent resentment, is far from being implacable, and the transition in the public mind from the most virulent hatred to indifference, and even to good will, often takes place with surprising rapidity. A peace, therefore, even between these two mighty rivals before the opening of the spring, may possibly take place, but cannot be rationally expected in the present state of things.

If then the perseverance of Britain, or the resentment of France, should effectually preclude a general pacification, will the government of this country negotiate a separate peace? In answer to this question I can only say that their external enemies are victorious, and if the war continues will in every probability be irresistible: that their internal disunion gives a strong hold to their invaders, even in the heart of their country; and that the question remaining for them is between an unpleasant peace and total ruin. If self preservation be to political bodies an obligation paramount to every other law, compact or stipulation, it can hardly be expected that the present alliance will be an insuperable obstacle to a separate peace between the two Republics.

The French have hitherto made no distinction between the different partizans in the places where they have obtained

possession. The Stadtholderians and Patriots share the same treatment, and no alteration is made in the general order of things. These circumstances serve to strengthen the *hopes* of peace, while the dissensions between the Allies strengthen the desire for it.

The English troops discriminate as little as the French. They have made themselves equally obnoxious to all parties, and plunder and illtreat the Stadtholderians as much as the Patriots. A gentleman professedly of the governing party told me the people were much more afraid of the English than of the French, and after a variety of other observations expressive of his fears exclaimed, Peace! Peace! We must have Peace! The violence and misconduct of the British troops is a fact established beyond a question by a public proclamation issued by the Duke of York, which you will doubtless have seen in the late British papers. I have therefore not scrupled to mention it as a cause of complaint in the mouth of everyone here. As to the additional charges brought against them, implying a want of spirit as well as of conduct in them, and the imputation of their propensity to retreat, as well as the reports injurious to the imperitorial character of the Commander-in-Chief himself, representing him as indulging more in convivial pleasures than the extreme delicacy of his present situation renders proper, or the rigid severity of Dutch austerity deems decorous, I must consider all this as unwarranted scandal, which however prevalent may be altogether groundless, and only proves that the allies are very much dissatisfied with one another.

The Duke of Brunswick is hourly expected to take the command and his arrival is ardently desired by those who think the system of resistance still practicable.

The appearance of internal opposition to the government

is entirely quelled for the present. Mr. Van Staphorst is at Hamborough, out of the reach of this jurisdiction. Mr. Visscher is closely confined, and the subscribers to the petition I have more than once mentioned to you have suffered themselves to be disarmed without resistance.

November 8. Mr. Van Hees the agent of their High Mightinesses called on me, to give me notice that they had passed a resolution to acknowledge me in my public character. After which I asked him whether there was any intelligence from the armies. Nimeguen he answered was heavily bombarded by the last accounts from thence, which were of yesterday. The news from Maestricht he said was very bad. "It is pretended," said he, "that it capitulated on the 4th." I suppose therefore there is no doubt of the fact. I told him that probably the campaign must soon terminate. "It must come to an end soon somehow or other," said he. "What can be done when the allies abandon us?" I asked him if the King of Prussia had certainly made peace? "So it is said, but the letters from Berlin deny it." What? The latest letters from thence. Generally, the letters from Berlin. He did not chuse, therefore, to answer my question as to the latest letters, yet the inference is not absolutely conclusive that they have letters from thence confirming the fact.

I hope we shall soon have some agreeable intelligence from our own country. The western insurrection has a most disagreeable effect upon the credit and reputation of America. A thousand exaggerations of the fact are propagated with great avidity, our friends know not what to deny, the malevolence of our enemies is gratified, and the advocates of universal freedom and humanity are afraid of losing the only country for which they can appeal for the practicability of their theories. I hope we shall soon relieve them from

their alarms, and shew them once more the perfect image of united liberty and submission.

With every sentiment of respect I remain, Sir, your very humble and obedient servant.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, November 9, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR:

Under the present circumstances of affairs in this country, I did not think it prudent to make any unnecessary delay in England, and accordingly left London of the 28th of last month. Our passage to Helvoet was short though not agreeable, the packet being very much crowded with passengers. We were only three days from London to this place.

I had been told in London that I should perceive fewer symptoms of war in this country than I should leave behind me there; but I had no idea of finding everything so perfectly quiet as it is. Excepting the course of conversation in company, you would imagine yourself to be in a land blessed with a profound peace. No confusion, no agitation, no aggregations in the streets, no appearance of exertion. I had almost said no symptom from any part of the people of feeling an interest in the fate of their country. You remember, Sir, how feeble the efforts of this people were when their war broke out with England in 1781. Yet at that time the active spirit of liberty predominated. Patriotism was the popular idol, and the power which upon the whole governed the country rested much for its support upon the motives of public spirit. But now that the reins of government are held by a power, professedly founded upon mere force, a power which has always been at war with

public spirit and considered patriotism as its deadly enemy, which has always dreaded enthusiasm and discountenanced the *amour sacré de la patrie*, you may judge what a state of lifeless imbecility characterizes the people, even at a moment so full of danger and dismay as the present.

The Government meets with no internal resistance. The appearance of opposition lately made at Amsterdam, has been completely crushed, and the petitioners have tamely delivered up their arms at command. Van Staphorst has fled, and is safe at Hamburg. Visscher is in close confinement, and patriotism is again compelled to hide its head. This people I fear have lost that energy of character which once so honourably distinguished them. Had there been a common share of spirit displayed by the petitioners at Amsterdam, the consequences I am informed would have been extremely different; but it was a struggle between weakness and impotence, in which the former can scarcely be said to have obtained the victory, though the latter was certainly defeated.

But passive obedience and non-resistance are one thing; and the warm, animated zeal, which is necessary for the defence of an invaded country, the dauntless heart and the nervous arm, which inspired and directed by the enthusiasm of liberty have heretofore performed miracles for the salvation of this as well as of other countries, are another. The strength of the government is sufficient to control the inclinations of their adversaries within their walls, but it can hope nothing from their assistance. It can paralyze their limbs, but cannot arm them in its defence.

They have to contend with enemies of a very different description, with armies powerful in numbers, under the most perfect discipline, of uncontrolable impetuosity, and who pursue to the utmost every advantage they obtain.

There is another circumstance which has added to the extreme debility which has characterized the defence of their frontier against the present invasion. The length of time elapsed since this country has been before engaged in a war by land has removed all the officers of martial experience from their troops, but especially from the command of their fortified towns. The usual system of patronage and protection has conferred most of these places as sinecures upon favorites, and in the distribution of the places military merit has been deemed the most unnecessary and useless of all qualifications in the officer to be provided for. The benefit of the individual was the only consideration of importance, for as to the service required, where is the cowardice or stupidity that can be inadequate to the mere parade of a military government in time of peace?

But however suitable the post may be to the officer in peace, it seems the officer turns out very unsuitable to the post in war. So that when the day of trial comes, one commander resigns on account of his health; another finds himself incapable to maintain his station from his old age. A third contrives means to be disgusted at some paltry pretence for taking offence; and a fourth without ceremony surrenders as soon as his command is invested. I am told that all these things have really happened, and the most bitter execrations are vented against the Prince of Hesse, the late governor of Bois le Duc, for capitulating as he did. Treachery and cowardice are both very liberally imputed to him by the partisans of this government, but I know not with how much foundation. A momentary popular odium is very often the lot of the best officer when unfortunate, and at such a point of time the voice of the people is far from being infallible. . . .

It is to me a new thing under the sun, to see a people

anxious to be conquered, and praying for the success of their enemies; though not indeed in the spirit of Christian humility. This phenomenon now discovers itself more and more to my view. Since my arrival here the intelligence has been generally unfavorable to the allies. The king of Prussia's peace is ascertained. Maestricht has capitulated, and Nimeguen is severely bombarded; at each of these several articles of news I have seen more than one Dutchman's eyes sparkle with pleasure, and I have observed countenances to fall at the transient rumors of successful sallies from both those towns, which have been invented and propagated to cheer the sinking spirits of the Orange party. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 6 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

AMSTERDAM, November 16, 1794.

SIR:

The Stadtholder returned to the Hague from Nimeguen four days since. On the 14th I had the honor of an audience from him and delivered my credentials, so that the forms of my reception at this Court are finished.[1]

I came yesterday from the Hague to this city, where I hope to have better means of obtaining information which may be worthy of communication than I could at that place.

In my last letter I mentioned the peace said to have been made by the King of Prussia as a fact almost ascertained. Since that it has again become more questionable, and at present is even denied with great confidence. From various symptoms however I still venture to speak of it as an event

[1] "He was civil enough" is the entry in the Diary. An audience with the Princess of Orange was given on December 4.

which, if it has not yet already taken place, may be expected before spring.

Nimeguen has met with the same fate as Maestricht, or rather with a worse, for it did not obtain a capitulation. The British troops in evacuating the place did not retrieve their character for good order and rigid discipline.

By the capture of Maestricht an army of thirty-five thousand French troops is released to act elsewhere, and Breda and Gertruydenberg are said to be menaced. The whole number of the French troops who are now brought to bear upon this country is about ninety thousand men. Of the allies there are not more than thirty-five thousand to oppose them. I know not of any defensible fortress to balance this great inequality of numbers, and you can easily judge what the event probably will be under circumstances like these.

The French troops I am just informed have already crossed the Waal, at Tiel. Nimeguen did capitulate. A gentleman just told me he saw the convention, consisting of three articles. That a continuance of their customary rights and privileges is stipulated for the inhabitants. The allied troops evacuated the town and crossed the river previous to the capitulation, leaving only 800 men behind, who could not get over the river, the floating bridge having been burnt. The troops that crossed were exceedingly harassed in their passage, and met with great loss from the fire of their enemy. The crisis of this country's fate is approaching with great rapidity and peace, *if they can obtain it*, is become of despotic necessity to them.

Upon my arrival here last evening Mr. Bourne called on me, and told me he had just come from seeing General Eustace,[1] who had in the morning been arrested and had

[1] John Skey Eustace, who had served as aid to Major-General Charles Lee in the American War of Independence. See *Lee Papers* (New York Hist. Soc. Coll.);

his papers seized by order of the magistracy of this city, that he was confined to his chamber with a guard over him, and his papers had been sent to the Hague. Nothing criminal had however been found among his papers, and he expected to be released as soon as an order should be obtained from thence. That the General had served in the French armies since the declaration of war between the two Republics, but, upon receiving the Proclamation of the President, declaring the neutrality of the United States, had immediately resigned his command and withdrawn from the service of France.

This morning a gentleman of this city, a friend of General Eustace, called to see me, and requested me to interpose in such manner as I should think proper in behalf of that gentleman as a citizen of the United States. I told him that as one of my fellow citizens that General was entitled to all the good offices and assistance that I could render him, but that no representation on my part would probably be of any service to him, if he had forfeited his right to the privileges of the American neutrality by his engagements in the French service. That I would endeavor to obtain permission for access to him in his confinement, and would do everything to serve him in my power, consistent with propriety and the obligation of my own duty.

Mr. Visscher and the five other persons arrested for their concern in the remonstrance presented to the magistracy have been sentenced to six years hard labor in the common workhouse and perpetual banishment afterwards. The workhouse is the customary place to which common malefactors are condemned.

It is said that the severity of this punishment was owing

Correspondence of French Ministers (Turner), 272; and *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 295.

to the representations of the British Ambassador, who insisted upon it as satisfaction for the reflections contained in the remonstrance against the British troops.

November 17. I wrote a card this morning to the officer by whose command General Eustace was arrested, informing him that this gentleman had demanded the benefit of the treaties subsisting between this country and America, and requesting an order for access to him. The officer appointed this day at one o'clock for the purpose. And when I went to the house according to the appointment I found he was already released, though his papers are not yet returned to him. They have apologized in some measure to him, and the Grand Bailiff of this city gave as an excuse to me that their suspicions had been grounded upon the General's having been so lately in the service of France.

Upon conversing with him afterwards I find that he has never served in the French armies, since the war with this country, and is therefore fully entitled to all the protection that our treaties can afford him. He is irritated, as may naturally be expected, at the treatment he has received, and it is not improbable that you will hear from him upon the subject in America.

I hear of an opportunity for Philadelphia which obliges me to conclude for the present with the assurance that I remain, with sentiments of invariable respect and consideration, Sir, your very humble and obedient servant.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 7 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

SIR: AMSTERDAM, November 19, 1794.

The opinion that a general peace will take place before the opening of the spring is still very prevalent, though I do

not find any one who professes to *believe* it. The idea appears to be only founded upon the absolute necessity which is supposed to exist on the part of the combined powers to finish the war.

With respect to this country, the letters which I have done myself the honor to write you since my arrival here will serve to shew the hopeless condition of the allies. I might perhaps spare you the trouble of reading an annoying detail of French success, which in all human probability must still continue, until their own moderation shall dictate the terms of their retreat, or the perseverance of their enemies to maintain an impracticable opposition shall plant the standard of the French Republic upon the walls of Amsterdam.

Britain, however, yet adheres inflexibly to the continuance of the war, and this determination fully coincides with the wishes of the Patriotic party here. This extraordinary concurrence is no doubt extremely embarrassing to the government of the United Provinces, nor is it easy to conceive how they will extricate themselves from this critical predicament. A continuance of the war they have reason to expect will terminate in their utter destruction. A separate peace with France would no doubt be humiliating to them in the extreme, but it might at least serve to prolong their existence, and it is to be remarked that the declaration in favor of this measure originated first in Zeeland, the Province where the power of the Stadtholder is the most extensive and his influence the most universal.

The Patriots are very sanguine in the expectation that France will make common cause with them, and will not treat at all without the total expulsion of the Stadtholder. But I confess I do not see at present upon what foundation their expectation stands. If there were any concert between them, it would necessarily be kept profoundly secret, and

it is therefore impossible to say that none actually exists. I can only observe that I have not discovered anything upon which a probability of such a circumstance can be raised, and all the public appearances are against it.

France lately renewed the declaration, that she will not interfere in the internal affairs of any other country. She makes no distinction between the different partisans in the places which have capitulated, nor does any particular animosity against the House of Orange appear at present, either in her public councils, or in her armies. So that a peace between the French Republic and the present States General does not appear to me to be an impossible event.

It is now said that the Duke of Brunswick has positively refused the command of the allied army, or rather, that he annexed such conditions to his acceptance as could not be complied with. The dissatisfaction between the people of this country and their English allies continually increases. The complaints against the Commander-in-Chief become more and more grievous from day to day. The nature of them will be fully explained to you by the bearer of this letter.

The intelligence of every kind relating to the war is only to be gleaned from the private letters which arrive from the invaded country. The Duke of York's[1] defeat of the 19th of last month, an account of which I wrote you from London, was not publicly known at the Hague on my arrival there. Every unfavorable event is suppressed as much as possible, and the printers of public newspapers are suspended in their employments for weeks and months together for publishing simple facts, which happen to be disagreeable at Court. The liberty of the press and, indeed, every other species of liberty, are circumscribed within very narrow

[1] Frederick (1763–1827), son of George III.

limits. Every traveller, as soon as he alights at an inn, must declare in writing his *name*, his *occupation*, his place of abode, whence he comes, where he is going, how long he means to stay, and *by whom he is known in this country*. General Eustace was arrested and had his papers seized, because he was accidentally detained here a day or two longer than he had thus signified his intention to remain.

The meeting of the British Parliament is to be next week, and it is expected with much solicitude by the political speculators. The Portuguese Minister at the Hague,[1] happening to be here on a visit, as well as myself, and lodging at the same house, called on me last evening. It is hardly possible for a conversation at this time to turn upon any other subject than the prospect of peace.[2] He said he did not see how it could take place, as long as England should hold out. France had reconquered all her West India Islands in Flanders, and she would not certainly restore her conquests unless her own possessions should be restored to her. Without the consent of England there could be no return to the *status quo*, and England was not yet reduced to the necessity of resigning her acquisitions. The King has lately accepted the sovereignty of Corsica, which this gentleman considers as a very important accession to the British dominions, as facilitating very much their views for the extension of their trade in the Levant, by giving them a convenient port in the Mediterranean. This will be another motive for the obstinacy of Britain to persist in the war, and if she should become the sole combatant of France she could wage the war, which in that case would become

[1] Chevalier d'Araujo.

[2] "The King of Prussia's peace turns out to be a stock jobbing or trading speculation. The Spanish peace I suppose must be the same. The error, however, is only in chronology. It is only giving that as already done, which must be done very soon." *To William Short*, November 21, 1794. Ms.

exclusively maritime, much more advantageously and with better prospect of success than she does at present.

Speaking of the cause of complaint given by that power to the neutral nations, I observed that the system in which it originated was somewhat extraordinary. I found his ideas upon the subject perfectly coincided with ours. "A single town besieged," said he, "may be reduced by famine. The means may be within the power of the besiegers. The operation is of partial effect. The inhabitants in general suffer only the inconvenience of hunger, and the place surrenders. But to pretend and attempt to starve twenty-four millions of people, to cut off all the means of subsistence from a country situated like France, independent of the moral complexion of such a design upon which there is nothing to be said, it was merely on the point of practicability a thing altogether new. He believed such a design was never formed before, and on the score of policy it was certainly the method to unite the whole force of every individual in France against the allies, and to give the national power an energy which nothing else could do so effectually."

That plan is received almost universally in the same light, and as Mr. Araujo says it is the first attempt of the kind, so I think it will not very soon be again renewed. I think however that precedents of this kind may be found in the annals of British policy, and we were during the American war indebted to them for a similar intention.

I this moment hear that an agreement for a temporary cessation of hostilities until further order has been agreed on by the officers of the contending armies on this and the other side of the Waal. This is considered as a preliminary to winter quarters, to be taken on both sides, of which however I very much doubt. The weather grows cold, and

a severe season is expected by everybody, though I know not exactly why. The Stadtholderians tell us, it will be favorable to them, as the French armies *cannot* keep the field with hard weather in this climate in winter. The Patriots say that the cold will only shut up the canals, defeat the benefit of an inundation, and make the best possible road for the French troops to march into Amsterdam. We shall soon see what foundation there is for all or either of these opinions. I am, etc.

TO JAMES MONROE

AMSTERDAM, November 22, 1794.

SIR:

I received last evening from London the papers which I now take the liberty to inclose, together with a letter from Mr. Boylston,[1] the gentleman who chartered the vessel[2] in question, and with whom I have had a long and valuable acquaintance.

His letter states to me, and with obvious truth, that an early as well as a favorable decision upon this case is of vast importance to the interests of the United States; that in consequence of this capture an immediate rise of an hundred per centum of the premium upon insurance of all American ships took place, although it was already before that time double the ordinary peace premium. There are many other considerations which render any obstruction to the facility of our *returning* commerce from Great Britain at this time peculiarly injurious to us, and which you will certainly be able to appreciate at their proper value.

Mr. Boylston estimates at nearly £700,000 sterling the

[1] Ward Nicholas Boylston.

[2] The brig *Mary*, Captain Titcomb.

annual burthen of extraordinary insurance to which our commerce is subjected by this rise of premium. His calculation I think is not much too high, and it becomes an object of the greater moment to the interest of our country, as so large a proportion of our insurance is made in England; so that in its effects the principle of this capture operates for the present to the detriment of the United States, for the benefit of Great Britain.

I am well assured, Sir, that your zeal for the interests of the United States in general, and for the security and efficacy of their rights to all your fellow citizens individually, is too ardent and active to be susceptible of any accession from my solicitations. It would therefore be unnecessary, though I hope it will not be improper for me to add, that in the particular instance upon which I now address you my feelings of private friendship coincide with my concern for the public welfare. That the gentlemen to whom the property was addressed and belonged are all personally known to me. That Mr. Gill is Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, and Messrs. Head and Amory are among the most respectable citizens of Boston, and that in recommending the case to your attention I follow the impulse of my inclination no less than the dictate of my duty.

I am happy, Sir, that this opportunity is given me to return you my best acknowledgments for your kind offer of a good understanding and correspondence between us, of which my father informed me at the time when I had the honor of being appointed to my present station. I should have notified you of my arrival here before this but for the interruption of the communication between France and this country, consequent upon the present state of affairs. When the regular intercourse shall again be restored I shall feel myself honored by a correspondence as frequent and

considerable as may consist with propriety and the public service. I am, etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 9 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

AMSTERDAM, November 24th, 1794.

. . . . . .

I have made inquiry of several merchants concerned in the American trade, whether there was any ground of complaint arising from the want of execution attending any article of our treaty of commerce with their High Mightinesses?[1] The general answer has been, that many embarrassments, burthens and discouragements have been laid upon our trade, and that there is real cause of complaint as to the fulfillment of the stipulations in the Treaty. But in endeavoring to ascertain particulars I have hitherto been unsuccessful.

The merchants of Amsterdam are remarkably averse from communication relative to their trade. They are as evasive in answering any questions either as to its principles or its details as if they were all ministers of State, and although I have met with abundance of dissatisfaction with the oppression of our commerce, I have in vain requested and even solicited a particular statement of its grievances. It has been indeed promised from more than one quarter, and I am yet not without hopes of obtaining it, though I have hitherto been disappointed in my expectations.

As far however as I have been able to procure information as to the foundation of the complaint it is upon two grounds. The one arising from the recent prohibition of sundry articles from exportation, and the other from the

[1] That of 1782.

perception in some cases of heavier duties upon the American navigation than upon that of the most favored nation. With respect to the first they say, it is a direct violation of the article in the treaty upon the subject of contraband.[1] I have never considered, however, that this article, which under different modifications is common to almost all treaties of commerce, implied a surrender of the contracting parties of their right to prohibit in cases of emergency the exportation of articles which become of the first necessity for their own use. I have however requested a list of the articles which have lately been thus prohibited; but the gentlemen who are the most discontented with the prohibition, and who at first promised me such a list, have since excused themselves from it, observing that at this critical moment, while the government itself is in so dangerous and precarious a situation, they think it would be most advisable to postpone any representations upon this point, and wait for more quiet and peaceable times. The only articles I have heard mentioned in conversation are gunpowder and alum. I have been promised also a copy of a petition lately presented by the merchants concerned in our trade to the States General upon this subject. Perhaps some further information will result from the perusal of that. At present I can only say in general terms that the exportation of several articles of merchandise has lately been prohibited from hence, that American vessels have not been excepted from the effect of this prohibition, and that the merchants in our trade complain of it as a grievance.

The difference between the duties to which our commerce and that of the most favored nation are severally subject,

[1] Article XXIV. Monroe was raising in France questions of a like import upon the two articles of the treaty of 1778 governing neutral trade and contraband — articles XXIII and XXIV. *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 41, 101.

appears to me more liable to a demand on our part for the enjoyment of the stipulation contained in the treaty. It is known to you, Sir, that for many years there has been in this country a chartered West India Company. They had a certain jurisdiction by virtue of which all the duties laid upon the commerce with the West Indies were made payable to them instead of the Admiralty, and in many instances there is a difference between the impositions upon the same articles imported under the two different administrations. Previous to our Revolution the trade with North America was comprehended within the jurisdiction of the West India Company, which at that time was more favorable to the commerce than if it had been within that of the Admiralty. At the expiration of the Company's charter a few years since, they made a bankruptcy, and surrendered all their affairs into the hands of a committee of the States General, to whom all their rights and powers are thus transferred. The commerce of the United States, however, continues upon the same footing on which it stood while they were British colonies, and by its connection with the *privileges* of the West India Company is subjected to much heavier impositions than it would be at the Admiralty, especially upon the article of spices. For since the participation we have obtained in the carrying trade, in consequence of our own and the French Revolutions, our commerce with this country has become a very different thing from what it was in the days of our subjection, and its dependence upon the charter of the West India Company, which was then much to its advantage, is now converted into a heavy burthen by exposing it to the charges of a greater tax than is levied upon the navigation of other nations in the carriage of the same articles.

The merchants in our trade consider this as altogether

inconsistent with the article of the treaty which places us upon the level of the most favored nation. I think so too, unless we have submitted to it by express agreement, which is said by one gentleman with whom I have conversed upon the subject to be the case. I have not yet got from England the books which I took from America, and have not an opportunity of consulting the treaties at present. I have thought it my duty to acquaint you at any rate with the circumstances, and shall equally forward any further information as it shall come to my own knowledge.

November 25th. The British Parliament is prorogued again till the thirty-first of December, and the funds rose in consequence of that measure two or three per cent. The prorogation is received as a portent of negotiations for a general peace. On the other hand the National Convention have appointed two commissioners to be employed upon business under the direction of the Committee of Public Safety, but secret even to the Convention itself. These facts combined with the capture of Nimeguen and Maestricht, the subsequent inaction of the armies on both sides, and Mr. Fagel's mission to London, all strengthen the expectation of peace.

The *Insurrection* of Poland appears once more to be subdued. After a succession of severe defeats and the capture of Kosciuszko [1] and his successor in command, Warsaw has capitulated. The public sentiment even in England and this country was generally favorable to the cause of the Poles, but the destiny of that unhappy people must be completed.

An occurrence of a different complexion is that La Fayette has made his escape from prison, together with two companions one of whom however was retaken. This intelligence

[1] At Maciejowice, October 10. The Russians entered Warsaw November 8.

comes from very good authority by a letter from Breslau to a gentleman in this city.

A cockade with the word *Egalité* marked upon it is circulated among the patriots in this city, who do not yet venture however to wear it. This is a symptom of an understanding with the invading nation and of a concert among themselves in the party here which, though trivial in itself, is more strongly marked than any other that has reached me.[1] I have the honor, etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 10 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, December 2, 1794.

SIR:

In my last letter I informed you of the opinion that was gaining ground in public, that a peace would be speedily effected, and of the occurrences generally known upon which that opinion was founded. Its prevalence was in no respect more distinguishable than in its different effects upon the spirits of the two parties in this country. The countenances of the Orangists and of the Patriots had undergone a reciprocal change. Their conversation betrayed symptoms of the same revolution. From the dejection of impotence and despair, the formerly suddenly assumed a degree of confidence and assurance as great as victory itself could have inspired, and some of them with a significancy of nod and shrug, and all the grimace of mystery, hinted that *peace* was certainly negotiating at that moment, and the terms were so far settled and agreed on that the present ruling power in this country was perfectly secure. On the other hand the Patriots, by whom the arrival of the French is

[1] He returned to The Hague November 28.

expected much more ardently and more devoutly wished than the Messiah by the children of Abraham, began to tremble and falter, and manifestly to discover their fears of being abandoned by their promised deliverers. It was said that Sweden and Denmark were to be jointly the mediators between the belligerent powers, but the Orangists were in too great haste for peace to think of the forms and niceties of a mediation. In a numerous party composed of persons of this description at Amsterdam, I heard more than one of them express a great contempt for the idea of a mediation, and affirm that the powers *interested in the event* would easily settle their differences, without the intervention of any mediator. The unexpected prorogation of the British Parliament was considered as full proof that the Ministry of that country had determined to negotiate, and as to any difficulty arising on the part of France, it scarcely appears to enter their minds in the form of a possibility.

The next report was that the mediation was to be from the United States, and that Mr. Jay was already commissioned for the purpose.

I last evening returned the visit of the Minister of Portugal, which he had made me at Amsterdam. Speaking upon the subject of peace he said it was in the power of this country to obtain it. She had only to speak the word, and it would be done. I said it did not appear an easy thing to me for the States General to make peace without the consent of Great Britain. But, said he, they can if they please compel that consent. I do not see how they could, but I did not press the conversation on that point any further. I told him I had heard much of the mediation of Sweden and Denmark. "Yes," said he, "and you Americans are to be concerned in the business too." I told him, that on Mr. Jay's first arrival in England there had

been a report of his being employed for such an affair, and that since his signing the treaty with Lord Grenville it had been revived. But I had not believed it then, and do not believe it now. He said that there certainly had been some kind of proposals made to Mr. Jay on the subject, implying that they came from the British Ministry. "But," added he, "that Ministry have in reality no thoughts of peace; they mean to amuse and delude and gain time, but nothing more. They are absolutely bent upon another campaign. They will pretend to enter upon negotiations and to listen to terms, but it will all come to nothing. The Emperor is, indeed, extremely desirous of peace, but he will not make it without the consent of Great Britain. He will therefore make one feeble, ineffectual campaign more."

As this conversation was neither official nor confidential, you will justly appreciate the dependence to be placed in the opinion thus expressed. I have thought it my duty to give it you as accurately as I am able, especially as it concerns in some measure the United States themselves.

The determination of the British Ministry to pursue the war is now public, and the Orangists again begin to droop the head, and speak of mediation as a desirable thing.

I am not of the opinion of the gentleman of Portugal, that peace is so much within the power of this country; they cannot even abandon their allies and become their enemies, without extreme danger to themselves. Thirty thousand British troops are upon their territory; though unable to resist the progress of the enemy they are amply competent to the destruction of their friends, and what apprehensions are to be entertained as to the *avowed hostility* of those whose very *protection* is dreaded like a pestilence?

The magistracy of Amsterdam notwithstanding their severity against the presenters of the famous petition had

come to a resolution, as I am told, *not* to admit foreign troops into their city. A few days since a body of 1500 men from the English army appeared before Delft. Their presence was so much deprecated by the inhabitants that the gates were shut against them, and the magistracy, yielding to the popular impulse, resolved that they should not be admitted into the city. The Duke of York has been expected here since yesterday and has I presume arrived. The only ground of his visit that I have heard mentioned is that he comes to complain of the exclusion given to his troops at Delft, and to obtain a counter order and satisfaction in this respect. It is not probable that the force of the popular sentiment will stand against the uncontrolled dominion of the British influence. . . .

TO JOHN JAY

THE HAGUE, December 2, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

On my return here at the close of the last week from Amsterdam I received your favor of the 24th ultimo, and request you to accept my thanks for the communications it contains. By public report I had already heard not only that the treaty was signed,[1] but the pretended purport of many articles of its contents. I had already felt myself obliged to leave ardent and in some instances inquisitive curiosity in the same suspense in which I had found it upon this subject. Upon the state of the negotiation when I left London I could give our friends here no other information than what resulted from public report in that place from which all I had collected was that the affair was in a probable train of settlement. Since the receipt of your letter I have

[1] The treaty was signed November 19.

taken the liberty to mention the stipulation which you observe requires not to be kept secret.

The desire of peace among all the friends and supporters of the government in this country is animated to the highest degree by the prevailing opinion of an irresistible necessity. The task of essentially contributing to reconcile opposing interests to preserve dignity from humiliation and to harmonize discordant circumstances is in the public opinion once more assigned to the same person who in that opinion has recently performed it with so much ability. The hopes which have been indulged in this particular are at this moment however restrained by the general idea that an allied government is irrevocably determined upon the experiment of another campaign.

I have been informed since my return from Amsterdam that Mr. Voltravers is gone to England. He made similar application to that mentioned in your letter to me for which he assigned the same reason. I told him that such an appointment from me would certainly afford him no protection in England, and even if it could, a compliance with his request on my part was inconsistent with my ideas of propriety.

I received this day from Amsterdam a Baltimore newspaper of 30th September. It contains no intelligence of consequence.

The armies in this country do not at present appear to be very active. The Duke of York is here. There appears to be some difficulty about the reception of British troops into the cities. It is said the magistracy of Amsterdam have taken a resolution against the measure as it respects that capital.

I am with every sentiment of respect and attachment, Dear Sir, your very humble and obedient servant.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, December 3, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR:

I inclose herewith a letter from Mr. Dumas, which he requested me to transmit. The old gentleman's health appears to be very good, and he looks not older than he did when you saw him last. But oppression has had its *proverbial* effect upon him, and he can write, think, nor talk about anything but representative democracy and Joel Barlow.

Last week at Leyden I saw our old friend Professor Luzac,[1] who is at this time Rector Magnificus of the University. He received us with great cordiality, and I found him in his political sentiments moderate and rational. The instance is rare, and accordingly he suits neither of the parties in this country. The "Tories call him Whig, and Whigs a Tory," because he neither wishes to be the slave of the ruling power, nor to see his country liberated by means of being conquered.

There has been much talk about peace, sometimes with, sometimes without mediation. One day Sweden and Denmark are to be joint mediators, the next the United States alone are to perform that part. This moment we are told the Baron de Staël has left Stockholm, and the moment after we find it is Mr. Jay who has gone from London to Paris. Amidst all these reports there is no real prospect of peace whatever.

If the affairs of this country had not been so often retrieved from the very brink of the precipice, I should think them at this moment absolutely desperate. They all think them so, and Mr. Fagel, the greffier, has been at London

[1] John Luzac.

ever since I arrived here, to solicit ineffectually their inexorable ally to join in a negotiation for peace.

The subserviency of these people to the will of Great Britain is not at this time altogether voluntary. They cannot disencumber themselves of their protectors. It is their misfortune to be defended by thirty thousand allies, who would be more fatal as enemies than they are serviceable as friends. There is but a single step in the transition, and from the conduct of the British troops, one would imagine they had already taken it. It is hardly possible to conceive how much their assistance is dreaded. The cities shut their gates against them, all ranks of people equally detest and shun them; and, with what justice I am unable to say, the unpopularity of the commander is not less conspicuous than his rank. . . .

The British Ambassador here, Lord St. Helen's, alias Fitzherbert,[1] did not return my visit of notification. He gave an entertainment yesterday, intended for the Duke of York, who was expected here but did not come. The Court of the Stadtholder assisted at this entertainment. The Ambassador sent me an invitation. I sent him for answer that I was engaged, as was really the fact. I shall see him no more.

This circumstance is in itself so trivial that I have not mentioned it to the Secretary of State in my letter of yesterday to him. I do not wish to commence a diplomatic career by splitting hairs of etiquette.

Yet I am desirous that the circumstance should be known to Mr. Randolph and to the President. If you will please communicate it to the former, the object will be answered. I am, etc.[2]

[1] Alleyne Fitzherbert, Baron St. Helens (1753–1839), appointed ambassador at the Hague, March 25, 1794. He was one of the British peace commissioners at Paris in 1782.

[2] "By the capture of Antwerp a difficulty has occurred, upon which the gentlemen at Amsterdam have no doubt already written you. The annual interest of

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 15 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

HAGUE, December 22, 1794.[1]

DEAR SIR: . . . . . .

December 23. I this morning paid a visit to Mr. Van der Spiegel, the Councillor Pensionary of Holland, whom I have hitherto not been able to see on account of his sickness part of the time since I arrived, and having twice been so unfortunate when I went to visit him as to find him so much engaged that he could not see me.[2]

the loan made there [in December, 1791] of three millions of florins is, by the tenor of the obligations made payable at the compting house of Mr. De Wolf, and the bankers here [at Amsterdam] have annually remitted the money to Antwerp for the purpose. As the circulation of assignats is compulsive, the Brabanters, holders of the American obligations, are apprehensive of receiving their interest in that currency, and our bankers have not transmitted the money for the interest that becomes due for the last year. It may be added that many of their creditors are now emigrants, and may possibly have other apprehensions for the fate of this principal as well as of the interest. One of these called upon me at Amsterdam last week to enquire whether I could give him any relief. I told him that I had neither instructions nor power relating to that loan, but would readily transmit any representation he wished to make; and I did not doubt but the United States would do their creditors full justice. He said an expedient had already been adopted by the court of Denmark upon the same occasion, which had been satisfactory to their creditors in their Brabant loans, and which, if equally adopted by the United States, would very much accommodate him and many others in the same predicament. It was to declare that the holders of their obligations might receive their interest at Copenhagen instead of Antwerp, and that they might exchange the obligations themselves for others bearing the same interest." *To the Secretary of the Treasury* [Alexander Hamilton], December 5, 1794. Ms.

[1] On December 11, he removed to the house of Mr. Jehn, Hoffstraat.

[2] Van der Spiegel had been active in effecting the revolution of 1787, and was rewarded by the office he now held. He was a "man of letters and talents, raised (according to the language which has hitherto been fashionable even in this country) from an humble origin to consideration and eminence; but elevated by the Stadtholder's victory to the most important *elective* office of the union." *To Secretary of State*, February 5, 1795. Ms.

I told him I had some time since presented a memorial to their High Mightinesses upon the subject of an American vessel captured by a privateer with a Dutch Commission, carried into the Island of St. Martin's, and her cargo there condemned by the Court of Admiralty.[1] That I knew not what had been done with my memorial but took the liberty to solicit his attention to it. He appeared not to know anything of my memorial, and said it had probably been referred to the *Council of the Colonies*, that he could not conceive how they should take an American vessel at St. Martin's, between which and the United States there was a commerce, and that it would be necessary to obtain information on the subject. I told him that in my memorial I had stated that documents to prove the facts were in my possession, to which he made no reply.

He asked me if I had heard anything from America of a discontent (*mécontentement*) among the negroes of Demarara. I answered I had not, but mentioned the state of health existing both in Philadelphia and Baltimore, testified by your letter of November 8. He said he had no letters from America of later date than September. That the news from England by yesterday's post mentioned as a mere rumor these *movements* of Demarara, but he presumed had there been any foundation for the report, it would have made its way from other quarters.

I observed that many persons concerned in the naviga-

[1] The *Wilmington Packet*, Moses Andrews, master, and the property of Jeremiah Condy and Company of Charleston, S.C. She sailed from Bordeaux in July, 1793, for the island of St. Thomas, and was captured, September 6, by the *Elynda*, a privateer schooner, William Palmer, master, and belonging to Jean Baptista François de Bragelongne, of the island of St. Martins. The discussion extended over some years, and owing to the changes in the government and the doubtful situation of the Dutch colonies, remained undetermined when Adams left the Hague in 1797.

tion and commerce between this country and the United States had complained to me that it was subjected to restrictions which were extremely inconvenient, that a regulation prescribing the passage north about to American vessels, and requiring bonds of treble the value of goods shipped, conditioned that they *shall* be landed at the place for which they are cleared, and an express declaration that *capture by the French* shall not be understood to be an exemption from the penalty, was equivalent at this season to a complete prohibition. That I had known lately an instance of an American vessel obliged to go home in ballast in consequence of these regulations, and had reason to suppose others in the same predicament; that as the interests of the United States were concerned in the freedom of the navigation of their citizens, I felt myself obliged to make these observations to him.

He said that "as to navigation at the present season the severity of the weather was such as to occasion for some time an obstruction to it almost total. That the regulations I mentioned were common to all nations;" and, said he, "*our own* subjects are also bound by them. They had been adopted because *experience* had shown that vessels going through the channel could easily either slip into some of the ports of France, or *cause themselves to be taken.* That as *experience* had proved the necessity of some regulation, some of the merchants of Amsterdam had proposed that of going the northern passage, and the gentlemen surely could not complain of the effect of their own measure." I replied that any consent given by particular merchants of Amsterdam could not at any rate be a support to the regulation at present, when the season rendered the passage north about almost impossible, and was doubtless confined to that part of the year when that passage is convenient

or practicable. He said it was not a consent of the gentlemen but their own proposal, and if they were not satisfied with the effect of their own measure, they might *address themselves*.

He inquired of me whether I knew if General Eustace was yet gone? I answered he was. He said that his conduct here was very suspicious. That he wore a French uniform, that he saw very suspicious persons here; that as he declared he had left the French service in compliance with the requisition of American neutrality, some regard had been shown him in that consideration, which he did not deserve in any other. I said nothing on this subject.

I then told him I had instructions relative to a difficulty which had been made against the admission of a consul from the United States in one of the West India Islands belonging to this Republic. He said the Colonies had no free commerce. That by their old and original Constitution no foreign nation whatever could carry on any trade with them; that as there could be no foreign legitimate commerce to protect, there could be no room for the exercise of consular functions; as to any contraband that might be carried on, a consul had never been admitted to encourage that.

I said that by the treaties of commerce subsisting between their High Mightinesses and the United States, the stipulation for the reciprocal admission of consuls was without any limitation,[1] and it was understood by the government of the United States to extend as well to the ports in America as elsewhere. He rejoined that it was only meant the ports of the Republic in Europe. That it was an ancient difference (*démêlé*) that they had had with France, who had always insisted upon having consuls in their East India colonies,

[1] Article XXI of the treaty of 1782.

but which she had *never obtained.* That it had been an invariable rule observed with respect to all other nations, and was founded on the reason he had mentioned, that as they could have there no legal commerce, so there could be no occasion for the functions of a Consul.

Such was the substance of a conversation upon which I think it unnecessary to make any observations except to mention the reason which induced me to speak of the regulation requiring bonds as above mentioned, and also that upon which I said nothing in reply to his observations respecting General Eustace. The first was because the regulation, though in word it is universal in its application, yet from the nature of things its operation is, if not exclusively, at least more extensively prejudicial to the American navigation than to any other. I was in hopes that a mere statement of the circumstances would at least discover his dispositions as to an alteration. In this particular I was not disappointed, but as to the quality of the dispositions you will form an accurate opinion of them from the whole tenor of his conversation, which it is unnecessary for me to anticipate.

As to his reflections upon General Eustace, and the assertion that they had dealt with him more tenderly than he deserved out of deference to the United States, I could not assent to what he said conformably to my opinion, and I could not dissent without making *myself at least* a party to the cause of that gentleman, which I had always given him to understand was not my intention without orders to justify me.

I did not think the treatment he received here gave this government any title to acknowledgments on the part of the United States.[1]

One of their citizens, who had served in their armies in

[1] "Visit to Grand Pensionary. Began well, ended ill." Ms. Diary.

a respectable station and attained a high rank in those of France before the war between the two Republics, and which he had quitted to preserve the privileges of his country's neutrality, is arrested, has a guard set over his person; his papers are seized, sent away the distance of twenty-five miles, undergo an examination, are found to contain nothing criminal in them, upon which he is released. The liberty, the property of an American citizen, the security of his dwelling place, the intimacy of his private correspondence, all are violated, without any sort of intimation either of the design or of the execution to the Minister of the United States here, or to their Vice Consul then residing at the place where the arrest takes place. Nothing is found upon him even sufficient to support suspicion already roused. The only ground of the proceeding pretended is that he wore a French uniform, and saw suspected persons.

I could see nothing in this transaction that merited so much as my approbation in the capacity of my country's representative.

On the other hand, I was sensible that the particular situation of this government at the moment, surrounded by foreign and filled with domestic enemies, afforded some excuse for extraordinary measures, that a French uniform publicly worn would naturally appear to the jealous confirmation strong; that an intimacy with persons in open and avowed aversion to the ruling power (though free and reputable citizens, exempt from all legal pursuit,) would give some plausibility to the severities of fear, and that except in the momentary violence offered to the principles and feelings which we hold dear, no material injury had eventually been suffered by the individual. That the internal proceedings of one government ought not hastily to be arraigned by the servant of another nation, and that no

interest of urgency required of me at this time to give offence. I therefore thought it most advisable to remain totally silent upon the subject, and if I am to say anything to them about it, to wait for the instructions of the President and your's, Sir, for my authority. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, December 21, 1794.

. . . . . .

We have at this moment a rumor, which has darted like lightning through the whole Province of Holland, and which is propagated in such a manner, that there can be no doubt but it is indirectly countenanced by the Court. It is that two commissioners are appointed to proceed immediately to Paris for the negotiation of a peace, and Mr. Brantzen,[1] the former ambassador extraordinary in France, and Mr. Repelaer, a burgomaster of Dort, are named as the persons. This intelligence is probably not true, . . . because it is hardly conceivable that Britain should consent to a separate negotiation on the part of this country, or that she should join in a general negotiation *as yet;* and it is equally difficult to suppose that *the court* here, that is the governing power, should so far disencumber itself from British thraldom, as to negotiate separately and in a public manner for peace without their consent. . . .

Among the difficulties with which the government is compelled to struggle, the want of money is one of the most important. The weight of taxation with which these Provinces are burdened in ordinary times is well known to you. It has already been aggravated to the extremity of

[1] Gerard Brantsen (1735–1810) had been ambassador to France, 1782–1787, and again held the same appointment after 1806.

sufferance, yet the public treasury is empty. The public credit of course is proportionably impaired. The obligations of the Province of Holland, which you have always known at par, and generally higher, have depreciated to 55 and even 50 per cent. New loans have been attempted and totally failed. The dangerous and extreme resource of a paper currency has already been resorted to, and an emission of five millions of guilders has taken place to supply the impending contingency of public payments. The circulation of this paper, it is said, will be voluntary as to the people in general, and compulsive only upon the persons in office. But this regulation must be intended only to facilitate the introduction of the paper to the public, and there is little reason to doubt that its acceptance in *all* payments will be enforced very soon by the sanction of the Law. . . .

I perceive that the Dutch resident at Philadelphia does not write to his constituents so frequently, nor give them so particular accounts of American affairs, as would be necessary to give them entire satisfaction. If he is well disposed towards our country, and would be likely to make a just representation of things, I could wish he had some friend who should in a delicate manner intimate this circumstance to him. It would certainly render *him* a service, and might be useful to the interests of the United States. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 17 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

HAGUE, January 3, 1795.

This morning *the Chargé des affairs of Sardinia* [1] paid me a visit, and appeared to be exceedingly fearful of the events

[1] Italics represent what was written in cipher. The *chargé* was M. Plenti.

which a continuance of the present severe weather may produce. He said the Court and the States, he understood, were determined not to move from hence at any rate. That the ministers of Sweden [1] and Denmark [2] were resolved not to move, and those of the belligerent powers were in an embarrassing position, as their departure would have a bad effect upon the common cause, in the opinion which it would spread in public that the state of affairs is desperate, and their continuance here would expose them to be treated as enemies. That for his own part he should feel very much embarrassed in the predicament had he not recently received instruction in case of events to withdraw to England. *That the Ministers of Sweden and Denmark had offered to receive and protect his movables that he could not carry off, but that he had rather lose all, than give an alarm by transporting his goods from his home. He therefore made me two proposals. First,* that if I wished he would sell me his furniture and the lease of his house, which is at a low rent and would be convenient enough for me. *The other, that I should take a simulated sale of them, and have the use of them, in order to cover the property; that I should thereby render him a most important service.*

Though it would be extremely agreeable to me *to perform any good office for one of my* diplomatic *brothers, which might tend to establish a claim to gratitude towards my country,* yet I cannot conceive myself justified in any departure from the obligations of the *severest neutrality* for that purpose.

Upon the second proposal, therefore, I could not hesitate a moment in forming my determination.

As to the other, which would at the same time suit my own convenience, and comply with his wishes without infringing in the minutest particular upon the rights of others,

[1] Comte de Löwenhielm. [2] Schubart.

I told him I would think of it, and give him my answer to-morrow morning.

Upon reflection however I have concluded to *reject the whole*, because if the events apprehended by him should really take place, I feel the importance of establishing the most unequivocal claim to all the regard, which the laws of nations in similar cases attribute to the character which I bear. American property to a large amount has already been put under my immediate protection, and it is not improbable that I may be under the necessity of using my exertions for the indemnity of much more. In order to retain in full perfection all the rightful means in my power to serve my own fellow citizens, if the occasion should require it, I see the necessity not only of avoiding every act but every *cause of suspicion*[1] that might tend to impair them. The measure, though perfectly innocent, would probably be observed, and might at least occasion doubts and jealousies which would weaken the confidence upon which the full possession of my neutral privileges may depend.

These are only two among a considerable number of applications which are frequently made to me on either side of the warring parties, and wherein I find myself obliged to refuse what is asked of me as a favor. It is a disagreeable task to refuse offices of kindness, but I find it not less necessary than unpleasant.

It seems from the conversation which I have just related, that the *Swedish and Danish Ministers offer without scruple to cover* property liable to the laws of war, *nor do they think* [it] *necessary to be secret* in pursuing this conduct. It will no doubt *give them opportunities* to render most essential services, and may *entitle them to* gratitude which is a good instrument in the *hands of a negotiator.*

[1] Not in cipher.

I, too, by this singular concurrence of circumstances have this advantage in my power, and have no doubt but I might easily make myself very busy in the use of it. It might be useful; I will not say it would be unjust. It is not, I think, expedient. I have, etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 18 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

HAGUE, January 7, 1795.

. . . . . .

In the meantime some feeble hopes of relief are still entertained from the event of their negotiations at Paris. It is very questionable whether the authority of their Commissioners extends to the terms which it may be expected will be required, and which it should seem the Convention are now in a situation to dictate. They seem here to have made up their minds for an abandonment of the British alliance, and there will be probably no difficulty in that particular. But whether they are yet prepared to substitute the French alliance in its stead, and to go to war with those who are now defending them; whether this measure will not be required as an indispensable condition to the accommodation, remains a problem still to be solved. There is indeed one uncertainty more which is really the greatest anxiety of the Court party, though they do not mention it.

They are fearful that conditions specially unfavorable to the authority of the House of Orange will be required, conditions to which they are determined not to consent, because it would only confine to *them* the ruin, which at the worst they suppose will be general, and this is a species of devotion to which they are not inclined.

In the meantime the business of which I wrote you in

my No. 11 is still transacting. The *two persons*[1] I therein mentioned *were at Paris before* the Commissioners Brantzen and Repelaer. *They obtained passports, their errands being known, and those who sent them yet hope their success.*

It may be concluded from these circumstances that the destiny of this country is now in the hands of the French Convention. With a *public commission in behalf of* the present ruling power, and a *secret one treating for the Patriots*, they may chuse according to their ideas of their own interest, and close *with those who offer the best terms.*

In considering that the real interest of France must be effectually to detach this Republic from the alliance with Britain, it cannot escape reflection that her strongest security will consist in a Revolution, at least partial, in the government.

The negotiation of the moment is avowedly the effect of necessity, and it is not even pretended by those who conduct it that it is accompanied with a sincere desire of returning friendship. To the whole party France is an object of detestation and Britain of reverence, which no generosity can remove, which no violence and ill treatment can cancel. This truth cannot be more forcibly demonstrated than by the temper which evidently prevails. For while the moment of impending ruin extorts a cry for mercy, the determination to repay it with ingratitude is not denied, and cannot be

[1] See p. 254, *supra*. Italics represent cipher. Monroe has outlined the offers made to the Convention by these Dutch agents. *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 188. The mission of Brantsen was undertaken too late. It demanded the restitution of what had been conquered, and the withdrawal of both the French and the allied armies and the neutrality of Holland. In return the sovereignty and independence of France would be recognized. France desired a treaty of alliance, and to this the commissioners would not consent. The "patriots" of Holland sent to Paris as their representatives Blauw and Irhoven van Dam, and set up a claim for recognition as against Brantsen and offered full submission to France.

concealed. On the other hand, by changing the possessors of the administrative power, France will have in these Provinces a zealous and affectionate ally, bound to her by the same ties which now attach them so inseparably to her rival. The system of policy adverse to the power of the Stadtholder was for this reason always pursued by France under the Monarchy, and one would expect it to be renewed with more powerful energy, now that the ardent spirit of congenial liberty is superadded to all the original motives that supported it.

From the delays which were thrown in the way of the Commissioners on their route to Paris, and the absolute refusal of an armistice, nothing auspicious to the government which employs them can be drawn. The partizans of the Court therefore fear much for the event. But they are not without hopes arising from another source. They flatter themselves that the *moderate* party, which still retains the ascendancy in the National Convention, are disposed to tread back the steps of their own Revolution further than they yet venture to avow; that the day of French Republicanism is really past; that the night of their former government is rapidly returning, and that the principles of counter revolution will operate efficaciously, though in secret, to save the existing Government of this country from ruin. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 20 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

AMSTERDAM, January 19th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

In compliance with the request of the American bankers I came yesterday to this place, and arrived just at the moment when symptoms began to appear of a popular fer-

mentation, which still continues, and of which it is impossible to foresee the result.[1]

On Saturday the 17th the French troops entered and took possession of Utrecht by virtue of a capitulation. The usual government is preserved, and the prisons were prevented from being thrown open.

Yesterday morning a flag arrived here with a letter from General Daendels [2] to General Golofkin, the commander of the garrison in this city, *commanding* him and the garrison to lay down their arms, and evacuate the place. It is to be observed, by way of explanation to this order, that the garrison consists altogether of troops who have already been made prisoners of war by the French, and have stipulated not to serve against them during the war.

At about noon a deputation from the former *citizen militia*, who were disarmed at the period of the Revolution in 1787, made application to the magistrates of the city, demanding the restoration of their arms, promising, if they were satisfied in this demand, to maintain the tranquility of the city.

At about four in the afternoon an officer from the French army named Krayenhoff [3] came with a flag and exhibited

[1] At the request of the American bankers in Amsterdam Adams went to that place on January 18. He left The Hague in the morning and reached Amsterdam at about four in the afternoon, and "found it a moment of crisis."

[2] Hermann Wilhelm Daendels (1762–1818) was a major in the brigade of Gueldre in 1787, and found refuge in France, where he became lieutenant-colonel in a foreign legion under Dumouriez. He was promoted and served as a general of a division in the army of the North, and taking part with Pichegru in the conquest of Holland, he entered, June, 1795, the service of the Batavian republic as lieutenant-general. He took part in the campaigns and revolutions of that country, was sent (1807) to the Dutch East Indian colonies as governor-general, and, recalled by Napoleon, shared in the Russian campaign. See Mendels, *H. W. Daendels* (1890).

[3] Cornelis Rodolf Theodore Krayenhoff (1758–1840), a physician and political agitator. He attained rank in the French army as a superintendent of fortifica-

a commission constituting him commander of the city. He is himself a Batavian and went from this city a short time since. A criminal prosecution was commenced against him, and tomorrow is the day upon which he was to appear before the Court of Schepens.

His demand of the magistrates was the abdication of their authority, but, as I am not yet authentically informed of the particulars, I shall wait for more certainty to communicate them.

At the edge of the evening the three-colored cockades began to appear in the streets. The night was noisy. The song of the Carmagnole and the Marseillaise hymn resounded in the streets, but no violence was attempted.

8 o'clock P.M. The day has passed without any sinister accident. At about 10 this morning the three-colored flag was displayed upon the State house. A provisional municipality appointed by the Batavian Revolutionary Committee have entered upon the exercise of their functions. They sent a deputation to the Regency, thanking them for their former services, and informing them that there was no further occasion for them in future. In the afternoon they liberated from prison Mr. Visscher and the other persons confined for affairs of state. The tree of liberty was erected before the State House. The national cockade has become almost universal. The orange colored one however is still worn by the former garrison, who appear to be continued upon guard and patrole as usual. The Revolution was operated with not more than twenty-five or thirty French hussars within the city. It is not even certain whether a larger body has yet been introduced.

tions, but after 1813 he returned to Holland, accepted the rule of the House of Orange, and became a baron and a lieutenant-general. He was now adjutant general to Daendels' force.

Mr. Nicholas van Staphorst is a member of the new municipality, and is expected in town tomorrow.

The Stadtholder with his family and court left the Hague yesterday at about ten o'clock and embarked at Schevening; they will probably go to England.[1]

January 20th. This afternoon General Pichegru with a body of troops amounting to two or three thousand men arrived in the city. The Regency of Haerlem has also been dismissed, and the French forces are also in possession. They are likewise at Dort, and a few days more will give them complete and undisputed possession of the Province of Holland. I have, etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 21 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

AMSTERDAM, January 22, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

At the close of my last letter I mentioned the arrival of General Pichegru, with a considerable body of French troops; at the same time came five Commissioners of the Convention, deputed to the two armies of the North and of Sambre and Meuse.[2] The troops are quartered upon the inhabitants. The Commissioners occupy the house of Mr. Hope who has quitted the country. The General is quartered upon one of the wealthiest partizans of the former government, and every house in the city is ordered to receive two men upon application.

The states of Holland have given orders to all their of-

[1] See *Memoirs*, February 2, 1795.

[2] The letter to the Convention announcing the occupation of Amsterdam was signed by Representatives Bellegarde, Gillet, Lacoste, and Joubert. Portiez was the fifth.

ficers and commanders to make no further resistance against the French armies. All the principal cities of the Province have admitted their troops upon capitulation. Hitherto no disorders have taken place, no massacres, no pillage, not even any personal insult to the conspicuous characters of the party heretofore dominant. The order and discipline of the troops are almost without an exception. In short, at this moment, it is scarcely possible for us who are spectators to conceive that what we have witnessed is in reality the complicated transaction of a foreign conquest and an internal revolution.

As the property belonging to the United States and their citizens in this country could not be subject to the terms of a capitulation, I thought it might be of some utility to see the Commissaries, and give them notice of the expectation that the neutral privileges of American property will at all events be respected.

I accordingly paid them a visit this day, and was received in a manner perfectly satisfactory. The interview consisted principally of mutual compliments and expressions of civility, which it is unnecessary to repeat,[1] but in the course of the conversation I told them, that the principles they had observed in the midst of victory, and the discipline and regularity, which so honorably distinguished the French armies now in this country, perhaps rendered useless any observations of mine upon the subject of property belonging to my country or my fellow citizens. That, however, as a different mode of warfare might have been pursued, the duties of my situation rendered it proper on my part to assure them of my full persuasion that, upon any contingency whatever, all the American citizens and property here would enjoy all the protection and security to which they

[1] See the *Memoirs*, January 22, 1795.

are entitled. The citizen who appeared to be at the head of the deputation, and who held the principal conversation with me answered, that American persons and property will be under the same common safeguard with those belonging to this nation, of the principles by which the conduct of the French people is dictated, and of the loyalty and regularity constantly observed by the French armies. That the French people did not come here as enemies of the Dutch people, nor had they any intention of offering violence to their persons, their property, or their opinions. That if in the course of circumstances it should be necessary to make any *exceptions*, the Representatives of the French people would certainly make the strongest representations to their constituents in behalf of those whom they considered as their first friends, of a free people for whom they had the highest regard and attachment.

Notwithstanding the protection extended to all private property, I presume that in consequence of the present circumstances the natives here will before any great lapse of time be subjected to burdens, from which the citizens of the United States will think the property belonging to them within the Republic entitled to an exemption. These burdens may appear in the form of a requisition or a contribution, and perhaps in a form which we cannot anticipate. The Commissioners enquired if I knew what number of vessels and what other property of our citizens there is here. I answered them, I did not. With respect to the vessels I shall take measures to ascertain it, but for the rest, I am confident I shall not be informed until it becomes a subject of absolute necessity, in order to save the property from the effect of an established regulation. One American citizen and one English consignee of several others, are the only persons who have delivered to me any statements of

property, for which they demanded the protection of our neutrality, and I find the other merchants, holders of American merchandise, averse to any communication which they think is not yet of absolute necessity. . . .[1]

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 22 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

AMSTERDAM, January 24th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The municipality, or to speak more accurately the provisional Representatives of Amsterdam, are presided [over] by Mr. Schimmelpenninck,[2] an eminent lawyer, with whom I had formed an acquaintance upon my first arrival in this city. He is a man of fair reputation for abilities and integrity,

[1] "I have lately been informed that General Eustace, whose adventure in this country has been mentioned in several of my letters to you, did not go to America, but landed in France and returned to Paris. From a variety of circumstances I am led to suspect that he concerted with some of the Patriots here the measures which are now carrying into execution. I have little doubt but that he was disposed to make his arrest the occasion of a difference between the government to which I was accredited and me. In this disposition several of the Patriots, then under the harrow, but now in power, probably concurred. But neither the ostensible motives which they addressed to my passions and my docility rather than my understanding, nor the real purpose which they did not confide to me, appeared to me sufficient to justify measures on my part offensive to the government then existing, to whom I had so lately been sent, with assurances of friendship from that of my country. I therefore did not interfere at all in the affair after his liberation." *To the Secretary of State* [Randolph], January 22, 1795. Ms.

[2] Roger Jean Schimmelpenninck (1761–1825) was a deputy in the first National Assembly of the Batavian Republic. In 1798 he became minister and later ambassador to Paris, and to London. Raised to the dignity of Grand Pensionary, he refused the appointment of life president of the *corps legislatif* under Louis, and when Holland was annexed to the French Empire he became a count and senator. On the return of the House of Orange he was a member of the first or upper house of the States General.

both parties appear to consider him as worthy of the station in which he is placed.

. . . . . .

I saw him accordingly this morning, and stated to him the grounds upon which I wished to obtain as early information as possible upon their future intentions. I observed to him that the rumor appeared to indicate a total revolution of government, of Constitution, and of principles to commence from the present moment. That in the relation in which other nations stand towards this the knowledge of their further views becomes a subject of mutual importance, and that I believed it to be customary to give notice to other friendly governments of such great changes as that which is taking place.

He said *he believed* that the substance of all the institutions whereby the government has hitherto been administered would be provisionally retained; that by proceeding otherwise they could expect nothing but anarchy. That they had written letters to all the cities of this province requesting their new regencies to appoint deputies to meet together at the Hague; that these deputies were already appointed, and he supposed would assemble tomorrow. They would assume all the functions hitherto performed by the States of Holland. They had also written circular letters to all the other provinces requesting them to pursue the same system of alteration. That as soon as this could be effected an assembly would be formed consisting of deputies from the provincial assemblies, which would be a substitute for the former States General. That officers correspondent to the Pensionary of Holland and Greffier of the States General would be appointed, and in general that the mode of government would be preserved as heretofore. But that as the titles of "High and Mighty," of "Great and

Noble," and the like, are not acceptable at the present day, these Assemblies would be known under more civic denominations. Perhaps they would be called the "Assembly of the United Provinces," "The Assembly of the Province of Holland," or something similar, but the powers would still remain. He added, that he had yesterday seen and conversed with the representatives of the French people upon this subject. That they entirely concurred in the opinion that this is the best system that can be pursued for temporary arrangement, *and had promised to support them in it.*[1]

He assured me that he would not forget the intimation relative to the notice to be given to other powers of the change of government here, and I requested him also to bear in mind that the credentials of ministers to and from the late States General may perhaps be so far affected as to require renewal or change. . . .[2]

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 23 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, February 1st, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

A vessel belonging to Mr. Swanwick,[3] bound from Philadelphia to Hamburg, was obliged some days since by stress of weather to put into the Texel, and an application to the representatives of the French people became necessary to obtain a permission for the captain to depart and proceed upon his voyage. I saw them accordingly this day, and they assure me that the necessary orders shall immediately be given, requiring only for their justification a demand in writing, which I have therefore made.

[1] In cipher. [2] January 31 Adams returned to The Hague.
[3] James Swanwick. It was the *Active*, William Blair, master.

They said they were happy to have the ministers of the powers in friendship with France as witnesses of the manner in which they conducted themselves in this country. I answered, that the testimony of every spectator must be honorable to them in the highest degree. And certainly their conduct has been not merely just but generous. They have not only promised and secured respect for the persons, property, and opinions of this people, but they have done the same towards the individuals even of the other nations at war with them. The ministers of Great Britain, Spain, Prussia and Sardinia left this place upon the approach of the French armies. The Spanish Minister had his horses taken from his carriage in the middle of the road, and was left thus in the coach on his way through the province of Guelderland. This depredation was committed by soldiers of an *allied* army.

But the Portuguese and Russian Ministers,[1] and the Secretary of the Prussian Legation,[2] who remained here, have not been molested, but have been treated with politeness and attention. The Russian Minister, desiring to leave the country, was provided with a passport by the representatives of the people. It has been left at the option of the others to withdraw or to remain at their pleasure, and all the privileges of the diplomatic character are allowed them, and have not been violated by any of the troops. . . .

The inveteracy against Great Britain appears to be unanimous among them, and discovers itself upon every occasion. They talk of making a descent in England, as of a thing decided on, and most of them are ambitious of being employed in the expedition. Their hopes of success are founded upon the expectation that they shall have only to contend with such warriors as they have found in the British troops

[1] Chevalier d'Araujo and Count de Kalitcheff. [2] Baron de Bielfeld.

upon the continent. They declare universally that these troops are the worst of all the allied armies. To all the others they render full justice, most especially to the Austrians. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

[ALEXANDER HAMILTON]

THE HAGUE, February 2d, 1795.

SIR:

On the 5th of December last I had the honor of writing you relative to the loan of 800,000 dollars, which has been proposed, and to the interest due and not paid upon the Antwerp loan.

Since that time a total revolution has taken place in the political state of this country, but hitherto without operating any change of circumstances favorable to the success of the intended loan. The shyness and timidity of wealth are not yet removed, and the numerous recent deficiencies of payments at once diminish the usual quantity of superfluous money, and shake the confidence of individuals in all public engagements.

The interest due upon the loans of the Emperor of Russia, of Poland, of Sweden and of the Dutch East India Company are all suspended. The province of Holland itself is more than insolvent, and the only securities which have not considerably depreciated are those of the United States.

The advices from Lisbon upon which at all events the opening of the loan is to depend, have not been received. The bankers have repeatedly urged to me, and they have also written to you, Sir, their opinion of the expediency of an unconditional authority to take advantage of any favorable opportunity which may present itself. They say that from

the nature of these transactions an occasion frequently occurs, which opens for a few days an avenue to the object which is totally barred before and afterwards.

They have written to Hamburg to make inquiries whether the loan could be made there, in case it should continue to be impracticable in this country. They have received orders to transmit money for the payment of the interest due upon the Antwerp loan, orders which it has hitherto been impossible for them to execute. At the time when the interest became due the communication between Amsterdam and Antwerp was interrupted, and a prohibition of the government here prevented the remittance. The intercourse is now perfectly free, but Mr. de Wolf's compting house is shut up, and I have been told that he is himself detained as an hostage to secure the payment of a contribution imposed upon the city of Antwerp.

Should he be speedily liberated and his compting house again opened, the holders of the Brabant obligations who are already impatient and uneasy will become clamorous unless they are immediately paid, and the delay, which I fear will then be inevitable, must have some temporary effect upon our credit.

Whether this delay in the case supposed shall be unavoidable or not, must depend upon the capacity and disposition of Mr. de Wolf to *advance* the money, for I confess I have little expectation that it will be remitted from hence.

In a conversation which I had a few days since with Mr. William Willink and Mr. Hubbard they informed me, that when their payments of this month and of March shall be made, they shall be in advance with the Treasury Department. And the former of these gentlemen intimated that in case Mr. de Wolf should be liberated, the obligation of making *advances* upon *his* loan was incumbent upon *him*,

as those upon *their* loans would be a sufficient burden upon them.

This circumstance is mentioned in order to warrant an observation which becomes indispensable. It is, that no exertions beyond what a sense of duty prescribes are to be expected from the Amsterdam gentlemen to secure the fulfillment of our stipulations in the contract made at Antwerp.

It was also hinted that even in case there should be funds in possession at Amsterdam sufficient for the remittance, the possibility of an appropriation to other than the intended purposes of the money after its reception at Antwerp ought to be considered.

The character of the house at Antwerp is altogether unknown to me. The suspicion discovered on this occasion may, perhaps without injustice, be attributed in part to motives more immediately concerning the interest of the gentlemen at Amsterdam than those of the United States. But in the revolutions of property and of principles which have become so frequent at this time, the inconvenience and danger of multiplying great pecuniary trusts cannot escape observation.

These trusts are necessarily so great, and at the same time accompanied with so little real responsibility, that it is to be wished the United States may seldom have occasion in future of recurring to the resource of European loans.

When payments of the principal are made a certain number of specific obligations are usually called in and cancelled. An instance has lately occurred in which the bankers who had negotiated a loan for the Danish government, instead of cancelling the obligations they had paid off, issued them into circulation again, and by this infidelity have loaded their employers with a double payment of the same debt.

The Emperor's bankers towards the close of the last year, advertised in the public papers that the interest payable on the then ensuing new year's day would be paid as usual. By a subsequent advertisement they gave notice that the payments would be suspended for want of remittances. In the interval between the two publications they are said to have sold out all the obligations upon the loan held by themselves.

The Swedish bankers at Antwerp have paid the interests due since the arrival of the French in that city in assignats, whether by order of their government or otherwise, I am unable to say. In either case the creditors are without remedy. In the latter the Swedish government is in the same situation.

The bankers of the United States at Amsterdam are men of so much integrity that nothing is to be apprehended from their transactions disgraceful to themselves, or derogatory to the honor of their employers. But the confidence which is safe in their hands, cannot with equal security be entrusted to a variety of commercial houses in different parts of Europe, among foreigners not amenable to our jurisdictions, and subject to no other control than their individual fidelity.

Upon this occasion it may be proper to suggest to consideration the propriety of some arrangements to ensure the payments of interest upon the Antwerp loan in future, independent of any *gratuitous* exertions at Amsterdam. Great confidence may be reposed in the dispositions of those gentlemen to maintain the credit of the United States in their own city, and they will not hesitate in case of necessity to anticipate from their own chest a payment of interest, rather than suffer a failure of punctuality in the performance of stipulations contracted by their agency. The credit of

the United States at Antwerp they do not conceive to be so much within their department, nor of primary importance. It has nothing to expect from them but neutrality. I have the honor, etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 24 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

DEAR SIR: THE HAGUE, February 5, 1795.

I have just returned from a visit to the citizen Paulus,[1] President of the Assembly of Provisional Representatives of the people of Holland.

By the notification, a copy of which was inclosed with my last letter, it will be observed that the President of the Assembly takes the place of the former Councillor Pensionary as to his relations with foreign Ministers.

He spoke of the revolution which had just taken place and of the moderation and humanity, which had attended it. I observed that a revolution, conducted through with the same principles and conduct which had hitherto distinguished this, would exhibit an example worthy of admiration to all the nations of the earth. He replied that the national character, which was in general free from rashness and impetuosity, would still continue to direct a sober and regular conduct; that justice must have its claims, and the crimes which have for seven years oppressed and persecuted the Patriots of the country, will meet with *punishment*, though not with *revenge*.

He said that under the alteration which had taken place he hoped there would be none unfavorable to the friendship subsisting between the two nations. That we were sister

[1] Peter Paulus (1754–1796). See Adams, *Memoirs*, February 5, 1795.

Republics, and as the number of such sisters is very small, they had a particular value for our friendship. That I should find among the persons now engaged in public affairs many who had been the most active in promoting the acknowledgment of our independence, and although they were now proceeding upon a system altogether different from that which they pursued at that time, yet their sentiments and dispositions towards us were still the same. That he had it expressly in charge from the Assembly to make me these assurances, *and to add that they were resolved to perform* [1] religiously the *obligations of their treaties with the United States, and were disposed even to contract closer connections with them if they are so inclined.*

I told him that relative to circumstances which had so recently occurred, it was needless for me to observe that I could have no orders or instructions from the government of the United States to express their sentiments, but I could take upon myself to say, that the assurance of a continuation of the friendship and harmony subsisting between the two Republics would be received with great satisfaction, and would meet with the return of a similar disposition.

As to the proposal of a closer connection I thought best not to appear to have noticed it. . . .

The communication by the posts is opened anew with France, but has not yet become regular. All the other external posts are stopped, and the dearth of intelligence is consequently great. The operation of the late events here upon the policy of the belligerent powers is yet unknown, nor does it appear whether this Republic will yet be permitted to remain in peace.

Should this be the case, undoubtedly the direct commerce of the United States to this country will become very advan-

[1] Words in italics were in cipher.

tageous, and will be more considerable than it has ever been hitherto. But in case of a new war it will depend much upon the policy pursued elsewhere. If our flag is respected, if the rights of our neutrality are not contested, and the practise of plundering one nation to starve another is disdained as an unworthy mode of warfare, our merchants will have great encouragement to pursue the commerce which is now opening here. I am unwilling to make a contrary supposition, *but in case of necessity the proposal above related may deserve particular attention.*[1] . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, February 12, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Since the date of my last letter (December 21, 1794,) a revolution has taken place, the substance of which had been for some time expected, but the forms of which have been infinitely milder than had ever entered the imagination of any man. The French army of the North, after a brilliant and successful campaign from March till December, had at length reached the banks of the Waal, and was for several weeks arrested in its progress by the natural barriers which at all times have constituted the most important defence of these provinces. Just at that period a succession of weather almost without example both in point of severity and of duration fastened all the waters of the country, and while it constructed a safe and easy passage for the French Republicans into the heart of Holland, it rendered the resource of inundations impracticable to their enemies.[2]

[1] In cipher.

[2] "March 7, 1795. The Waters have been shut eleven weeks. Such a season is unparalleled in the memory of man. The severest winters in the course of the

The existing government of this Union was not prepared for an event like this. The troops of the Republic capable of opposing the march of the enemy were already reduced by the events of the war from 50,000 to less than 15,000 men. Of their allies the Austrians gave them but little assistance, the Prussians none at all, and the British were considered as a burthen rather than a defence.

The prevalence of British councils was however unimpaired in the cabinet. It had been proposed as early as October to send commissioners to Paris to negotiate a peace. A consent to receive them had already then been obtained, but the compliance of the British government with the measure was thought *indispensable*, and could not be obtained.

It is presumed, however, that it was finally granted, as the measure was taken. Two Commissioners were dispatched to Paris, but their authority was not commensurate with the exigency of affairs. The speech of the King of Great Britain at the opening of his Parliament seems to disapprove the step, but his Ambassador here still continued his legislative functions, and two commissioners of the French Republic, who in consequence of his instructions had been kept in confinement since last May, were not liberated from prison, even after the departure of the deputies upon their pacific mission.

The armistice which was the *primary* object of their negotiation could not be obtained. The Waal and the Rhine became passable upon the ice, and the passage of the former was accordingly effected by the French. On the 8th of January, a council of war was held at Utrecht, consisting of the Austrian, Hanoverian, British and Dutch

present century were in the years 1709 and 1740; but neither of those was so excessive as that which is now breaking up." Ms. *Diary*.

Generals, and the British Ambassador. The result of it was one more effort of resistance on the part of the allies. The actions of the 9th and 10th were severe, but their issue only served to prove the insufficiency of the allied forces for the defence of this country. From that period they gave up the point, and have since then been employed in executing their retreat into Germany. The Province of Utrecht capitulated, and the French troops entered the city on the 17th.

The next day the Stadtholder and his family left the Hague, and embarked in fishing boats at Schevening for England. He had previously demanded and obtained of the States General the dismission of his two sons as Generals in the service of the Republic. He then requested and received from the States General and from the States of Holland leave of absence for an indefinite time, and declared his intention to return and resume the functions of his offices whenever circumstances may permit, and testified his regret that he had not been able hitherto to serve the Republic more effectually.

The plan of operations at Amsterdam, the execution of which had no doubt been previously concerted so as to avoid the appearance of a conquest, commenced on the day of the Stadtholder's departure from the Hague.

A Dutch officer appeared with an order from the General of the *Batavian* corps in the French service to the *Commander* of the garrison then in that city, directing him and his garrison to lay down their arms, and he exhibited to the *Regency* a commission constituting him Commandant of the place. The former garrison consisted altogether of troops who had already been made prisoners of war by the French upon the frontiers, and had stipulated not to serve against them during the war. The Regency, sensible that any further resistance

to defend their authority could end only in their total destruction, directed the then commander to surrender according to the summons, and received the Batavian from the French army as commandant of the city.

About thirty French hussars were then introduced within the walls who took their station before the Stadthouse on the morning of the 19th, the three-colored flag was hoisted on that building, the tree of liberty was erected before it, and an immense crowd of people had collected together about it.[1] A *revolutionary committee*, consisting of ten persons self-constituted, or at least whose origin is traced no further, appeared in front of the house; one of their members read to the people there assembled a list of twenty-one names of persons, nominated by the revolutionary committee to constitute the Assembly of Provisional Representatives of the people of Amsterdam. He then demanded of the people, whether they approved the nomination, and was answered by a general shout of acquiescence. From that moment the Provisional Representatives deemed themselves vested with the whole power of the sovereign people of Amsterdam; and they commenced their functions by sending word to the former Regency that the people had no further occasion for their services.

Since that time they have distributed their accumulated powers into a variety of committees, for instance, of *Public Safety*, of *General Vigilance*, of *Justice*, of *Finance*, and of *Trade and Navigation*, besides constituting a mayor to superintend the police of the city.

[1] "I have assisted (by invitation) at the grand fête of planting the new liberty tree this day. This *tree* is a painted mast. I first thought the allusion was quite lost, inasmuch as it was a mast and not a real tree; but on reflection I think the allusion more complete, as I can almost prove *it* will not grow. *On manque l'esprit de la chose*, in my humble opinion." *Sylvanus Bourne to John Quincy Adams*, Amsterdam, March 4, 1795. Ms.

In all the other cities of the province a similar revolution was effected in the course of a few days. In all, the ancient regencies either did in fact, or by a revolutionary fiction were supposed to have surrendered, their authority into the hands of the people. A list of new names was always ready to be presented for acceptance, in order to substitute a provisional authority correspondent to that which was annihilated, and where the approbation of the audience was not testified by acclamations their silence was taken for consent.

While this operation was going through the admission of the French troops was also taking place. The internal revolution at Amsterdam you will observe was effected on the 19th of the month. The next day the General of the Army [1] and the Commissaries of the National Convention arrived, and were received as *friends*. The latter immediately published a proclamation to the *Batavian people*. They declared that they came as *friends* and *allies;* that they would respect the persons the property and the opinions of every individual; that the independence of the Batavian people should not be violated; that in the exercise of its sovereignty that people alone should reform or modify the government, and that all excesses *between the inhabitants* should be prevented.

In this manner was a total revolution of the sovereignty within and the introduction of a foreign army of seventy thousand men effected in the province, within the course of a week, without blood, without violence, and almost without tumult. The crisis of transition lasted but a day, and was attended only with noise. Since then the usual tranquility has been uninterrupted, everything about us has the same appearance that it had before, excepting that instead of

[1] Pichegru.

Orange flags, and cockades, and pictures, are substituted French soldiers, the three-colored riband, and the tree of liberty.

But although the sovereign of the ancient constitution was no more, its deputations constituting the States of Holland and all their derivatives yet existed. The revolution was hitherto confined to the *municipal* establishments, and it became necessary to extend it to the *provincial* government. The fundamental principle of the new system was pursued as closely as could be without great inconvenience. The new municipal regencies in the several cities deputed from each of their own bodies three or four persons to meet together and administer the government of the Province. These deputies from ten or twelve cities (for the revolution was not then completed in all,) assembled at the Hague, on the 26th of January. They took possession of the Hall where the States of Holland had always held their sessions, having first sent word to the Pensionary Van de Spiegel, and to all the former members of the equestrian order, that none of *them* would be admitted to their deliberations. They chose Peter Paulus of Rotterdam President for a fortnight, assumed the title of the *Assembly of Provisional Representatives of the People of Holland*, and made an express acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the people, and the rights of men and citizens. They also declared that as an immediate consequence from these principles, the States of Holland and West Friesland consisting of an equestrian order and voting cities, as also all hereditary offices of Stadtholder, Captain and Admiral-General, were annulled, and they determined that the votes in their Assembly should be personal, and not by cities. They abolished also the Gecommitteerde Raad, and divided their functions between three Committees of their own

body.[1] They recalled all the members of the Province in the Colleges of the Generality, and appointed three of their members to take the seat of the Province in the States General,[2] and hold it as long as the present confederation shall continue.

The example of this Province has been imitated in those of Utrecht, Guelders and Overyssel. Zeeland has capitulated, and as soon as the passage is opened for the French troops the new system will in all probability be adopted there.

The troops of their friends are quartered upon the inhabitants of the cities. The discipline of the army is rigorous and well observed. The only complaint I have heard against it is its being too severe. The examples of capital punishment, which have been inflicted in more than one of the cities upon soldiers guilty of the most trifling thefts, are painful to a people among whom the penalty of death is very seldom executed, and reserved for the most enormous crimes.

The Pensionary Van de Spiegel,[3] the Grand Bailiff of the Hague, Bentinck,[4] the deputy Greffier of the States General, Lelyveldt, two brothers of the Greffier Fagel, and three members of the Regency of Leyden, are under arrest. All the members of the Regencies [are] dismissed and forbidden upon the severest penalties to go out of the Province. Some of them are held to be responsible for considerable deficiencies in the public Treasuries, and others are supposed to be liable to criminal prosecutions.

[1] Public safety, war, and finance.

[2] The three were Hahn, secretary of the University of Leyden, Lestevenon, former minister to Brussells, and Loncq.

[3] Laurent-Pierre Van de Spiegel (1737–1800). He was not released until 1798 and then joined the Prince of Orange.

[4] Comte Bentinck van Rhoon.

When the revolution shall have pervaded the seven Provinces it is expected that a Convention will be chosen to form a new Constitution. The sovereignty of the people, the equality of individuals, universal suffrage, a single Assembly and Committees, will form the basis of the future government.

The communication with foreign countries is suspended, and that with France is not yet fully restored. We are therefore in a great measure deprived of external intelligence.

The direct commerce with the United States will I hope be soon revived, and receive greater encouragements than it has ever yet had. Whatever the motives of the former government might be, it is certain that their regulations were very unfavorable to the navigation of our country. The friendly dispositions of those who have now succeeded are the more unequivocal, because they rest upon the foundation of their interest and even of their necessities.

Among the members of the present administrations are many of your former friends. The President of the Provincial Assembly, Mr. Paulus, particularly requested me to present you the testimony of his remembrance. Even the cautious aversion of Mr. William Willink to public employment has been obliged to yield to the exigency of the times. He is upon the Committee of Finance at Amsterdam, and reluctantly submitted to the established regulation which permits no man to decline the task of public service assigned to him.

The apartments of the Princess of Orange are occupied by the Commissaries of the National Convention, who are styled the Representatives of the French people. They received the visit from the Minister of the United States at Amsterdam, where he happened to be at the time of their

arrival. They assured him that they considered it altogether as a fraternal visit, and expressed themselves in terms of the utmost civility towards the United States, their President and Vice President. They appear to be well pleased with Mr. Monroe, but as to his predecessor,[1] they spoke of him too, more than once.

The General in Chief of the Northern Army, Pichegru, is lodged in the building called the old Court. In the course of three years he has risen from the rank of a sergeant of artillery to that in which he now appears, and in which he has performed a campaign unparalleled in the history of Europe. He avoids as much as possible every appearance of public display; his dispatches to the Convention are remarkable for the modest simplicity with which he relates the most important successes, and he appears to prefer conversing upon any subject rather than that connected with his own exploits.

This disposition may be in some degree the result of a natural temper, but it may be partly attributed to a system taught by the fatal experience of so many preceding Generals.[2]

It is impossible to foresee what effect the events herein related will produce upon the system of Europe. The King of Prussia has a minister at Paris. The Imperial Diet has determined upon a negotiation for peace. The people of England begin to be impatient for the same object. Spain is reduced to the last extremity and all Europe is exhausted and tired of the desolating war in which it has been so long involved. But the perseverance of the British Ministry, concurring with the inveteracy of the French nation, will produce one campaign more, and it is yet uncertain whether

[1] Gouverneur Morris. The meetings with the French Representatives are described at greater length in Adams, *Memoirs*, January 22 and February 2, 1795.

[2] See Adams, *Memoirs*, February 3, 1795.

this Republic will be permitted to remain in future neutral, or whether it is only taken from one side of the scales to be thrown into the other. If she ceases to be a belligerent power, her present situation will open a very advantageous commerce to American enterprise. If she only changes sides in the war, an equally promising source of speculation will be opened, but will then depend partly upon the justice of another maritime power. The treaty signed on the 19th of November last must before this have been the subject of discussion and of decision in America. Whether ratified or not, many important points and sources of difference will remain undecided. At present it is more than ever the interest of the island to avoid a serious misunderstanding with the United States; they on their part stand upon advantageous ground to resent any violation of their neutral rights. The present state of affairs will make their reclamations for entire justice compatible with prudence, and if it should be denied, the means of increasing their federative strength will perhaps be in their hands.

I am, my Dear Sir, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 25 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, February 15, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

In the Supplement to the last *Leyden Gazette* is contained the address delivered by the *Batavian Deputies* to the National Convention. The mask is no longer necessary. These are the persons mentioned in my letters Nos. 11 and 18. They assume publicly the character of Deputies, and are admitted as such by the Convention. The authority however by virtue of which they act in this capacity does

not appear; it is the spring unseen which gives all the visible motion of the Revolution in this country. It consists of a number, not very considerable, of individuals belonging to different parts of the country, who concerted secretly the mode of conducting the great political alteration which was foreseen; who formed themselves into an association under the title of the Batavian Revolutionary Committee; who appointed the Revolutionary Committees of the several cities, at present the apparent fountains of the public authorities; and who employed these two deputies to negotiate with the Committee of Public Safety at Paris.

At the time when these persons assumed the office of delivering their country it was necessary for them to be as secret as possible in their operations. But the principles of the new system now establishing require publicity, and the banishment of all mystery or even secrecy from the councils of the Republic. The people are to know everything that is done in their name, how it is done, and by whom. Such is the theory. By the practice hitherto the deliberations of the new Assembly of Holland are not accessible to the public. They publish, however, their journals from day to day, and their laws as soon as they are made. It is remarkable, also, that of a power founded upon the supremacy of the people and the rights of man, the *people* know not at this day whence it originated, that an administration resting its authority upon the foundation of universal suffrage consists of persons substantially chosen by a small revolutionary committee, and in whose appointment the people had not any agency other than that of acquiescence, and that while every appearance of secrecy is exploded and almost proscribed, the actors and even the plan upon which every measure hitherto adopted has been taken are altogether unknown.

There are two objects of primary importance which this secret Revolutionary Committee wished to secure. First, the internal revolution which has been effected, and secondly, some precise conditions upon which their admission of the armies and their future connection with the Republic of France should be founded. The first was certainly well contrived, and has been executed to admiration. But the negotiations with France were not equally successful, and this was perhaps owing to their having been commenced at a period rather too late. The Deputies did not arrive at Paris till the close of December, when the rivers had already been prepared by the hands of nature for the passage of the French armies. They treated secretly with the Committee of Public Safety, and probably obtained from them a promise, *as far as they could make it*, that the sovereignty and independence of the Republic would be preserved; but as for the rest, perhaps they were told they must content themselves with a dependence upon the generosity of the French people.

In a report to the Convention from their Executive Committees, made some time since, it was said that the Republic would make a peace with Holland under the guarantee of their own forces. Even at this moment the relative situation of the two nations remains a problem of solution not perfectly easy.

On the 20th of January (1st Pluviose), the Representatives of the French people with the armies of the North and of Sambre and Meuse arrived at Amsterdam, and on the same day they published their proclamation to the Batavian people, copies of which they addressed formally to the foreign ministers residing here. In this proclamation is expressly said, "We appear in the midst of you as your friends and allies. We do not come to subdue you. The

French nation will respect your independence. The Batavian people in the exercise of their *sovereignty* can alone change or modify the form of their government."

Yet on the 25th of January Carnot announced to the Convention that Amsterdam was *taken*. On the 27th the Representatives with the armies write to the Convention, that sundry places in the province of Holland are *in the power of* the (French) Republic. And in the beginning of February the Batavian Deputies address the Convention expressly in the name of a conquered people, and appear throughout their discourse to consider the fate of their constituents as being still dependent upon the will of the Convention.

They sollicit of that body to "restore the inestimable treasure of national Independence to Holland liberated by them," affirming at the same time, "that this is the only means of rendering this brilliant conquest really serviceable to France," etc.

They pray the legislators to *permit* the free people of the Batavian cities and country "the speedy election of their constituted authorities."

The two last clauses of this address are particularly remarkable.

It is in this manner alone, it is alone by the means of magistrates elected by the people in the provincial assemblies under the eyes of the Representatives of the French people, that *you*, citizens, will avoid all the evils which disorganization would produce, and which would be more irreparable with us than elsewhere. On these terms, citizens, every sacrifice will appear light to the Batavian people. They will even eagerly anticipate every assistance *which you have a right to claim* from them. The enthusiasm of *independence reconquered* will make them equal to everything.

Citizens, *the right of conquest* has acquired to you an active in-

dustrious nation, worthy of some esteem for the labours and sufferings which in former times they sustained for Liberty. *A wise policy and your equity will do the rest.* The Batavians deserve to be free. In breaking their chains, their gratitude forges softer ones for them which they will display with glory to the world.

The answer made by the President of the Committee to this address has not been published here, nor have I seen it. The Commissioners of the States General, Brantzen and Repelear, wrote to the former Pensionary Van de Spiegel a ciphered letter, in which they requested him particularly to observe the contents of this answer. When their courier arrived here the Pensionary was already dismissed. The letter was therefore delivered to Mr. Lelyveld, the deputy Greffier of the States General. Lelyveld instead of communicating it to them, contrived to send it deciphered to the Pensionary. The circumstance was discovered. The new Assembly was in consequence called together at midnight, and sat till six in the morning. The States General were assembled at seven. Lelyveld was arrested. Possession was obtained of the ciphered letter and of the cipher, and a new deputy Greffier was appointed.

The representatives of the French people demanded that when the seals should be taken from the papers of the Pensionary, *whom they consider as one of the bitterest enemies of the French Republic*, one of them may be present at the inspection. The same demand is extended to the papers of the other persons under arrest, and the resolutions have been taken accordingly.

While the Batavian deputies were asking of the Convention permission for their countrymen to constitute under the eyes of the French representatives a provisional government, the thing had already been done in two or three of the provinces. It is now completed in Holland, Utrecht,

Guelders and Overyssel. In all the operation is uniform, commencing with the dismission of the regencies, and intended doubtless to conclude with the dissolution of the States General, or rather their regeneration by deputations from the new Provincial Assemblies.

The preservation of this nation's *independence and sovereignty*, at least in point of form, seems to be so generally the inclination of the people and of their provisional representatives, that no proposition of a different system is yet hazarded in the public papers, though the press has been declared free. How far this *national sentiment* may be strengthened in the minds of the present leaders by the influence of private ambition, I shall not venture to inquire. But among their soberest citizens out of office there are some who think the happiness of the people would be best promoted by annexing the United Provinces to the French Republic.

Ever since the foundation of the Union the rival powers of France and England have alternately possessed great influence over the councils of the Republic. But the transactions of 1787 amounted substantially to a conquest; from that period the government here have rather submitted than consented to the measures proposed to them by their allies. Under a different constitution and administration the subserviency of the nation *must* remain. Their naval power, the foundation of all their strength in the days of their glory, is no more. Their possessions in either India, destitute of their maritime protection and defence, can therefore in future be held only at the will of others. Their commerce and manufactures, which have already suffered so much from the successful conveniences of other nations, are declining from day to day. The energy of character, which once distinguished the people, and was at the same

time the cause and effect of their heroic exertions and splendid achievements, has been broken by the contagious example of submission to foreign armies, twice exhibited in the course of the seven last years, and the name of Independence will only keep together a party in the Republic which would soon be dissolved in the Department.

Such are the reasons upon which the advocates of this policy support their opinion. It is not for me to pronounce upon their validity, nor is it yet possible to determine whether it will finally prevail. The present appearances indicate the contrary. I am, etc.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 26 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, February 19, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The President of the Provisional Representatives of Holland sent me last evening a copy of the new law declaring the importation of flour free during the course of the present war. He had told me there would even be a premium added to encourage the trade, but the law simply makes the article free. As it may be of some consequence in the United States I herewith inclose a translation of the publication.

That respecting the circulation of assignats is contained in papers already sent you; a general compulsive passing of them will be prevented *if possible.*

As the majority of the Provinces was represented in the assembly of the States General upon the new system, they have already begun there to annihilate the institutions of the former Constitution relating to the generality. They began by abolishing the Stadtholdership of the union, and

by a recognition of the rights of man. They have since abolished the council of state and the five admiralties.[1] They have also sent a solemn deputation to the Representatives of the French people here, to propose a treaty of friendship and alliance between the two Republics.

The answer delivered by the President of the National Convention to the address of the Batavian Deputies has at length been published here in the Dutch papers. It leaves the question as to the national independence of this people where it was. He calls them Batavian fellow-citizens, and exhorts them to build upon the foundations to be laid by the French nation. The Representatives of the French people here have repeatedly promised that the independence of this Republic shall be respected, and such is doubtless the system of the French executive administration; but from a variety of circumstances it would seem that the legislative sanction is yet wanting to the plan, and that it is a point of some delicacy to obtain it.

The deputation from the States General consisted of a member from each of the seven Provinces and their new Greffier, who addressed the Representatives of the French people, and informed them,

> that their High Mightinesses, together with all the Batavian people, friends of *Justice* and of *Liberty*, ardently desire to conclude between the two nations as two equal and independent Republics a solid alliance by the means of a Treaty, founded upon equitable conditions and equally advantageous to the two states, in order to establish thereby between them the foundation so long desired. of the *closest fraternity of which the annals of the world have hitherto made mention*, a fraternity, of which it is easy to foresee and to calculate that the consequences cannot but be extremely advan-

[1] The five Admiralty Boards were those of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Zeeland, North Holland, and Friesland. Only the first three were of any moment.

tageous to the two nations, while it cannot fail to advance and effectuate the general peace of Europe.

If these expressions are compared with the plan of alliance mentioned in my No. 11, perhaps the outlines of the future alliance as intended to be proposed from hence may be inferred. The deputation was doubtless very courteously received, as was that from the Provincial Assembly of Holland, sent two days before for the same purpose; but what answer was given them does not yet appear.

Under the present circumstances it is from Paris that you will probably receive the most accurate and earliest information of the political system which is to govern this country. The determination of annexing the Austrian Netherlands and Belgium to the French Republic has been openly professed in a speech, which was received with the most distinguished marks of applause. "The Ocean and the Rhine," said the orator,[1] "great rivers, the mountains and the sea must be our future boundaries; beyond them we are the friends of every *people*." This line necessarily comprehends several important places hitherto within the dominion of the United Provinces, and which may be expected to be ceded by the treaty, at the same time when the independence of the remainder will be formally acknowledged.

The French troops are in possession of the province of Zeeland, and the Revolution has been effected at Middelburg the capital.[2] The details of this event are contained in the papers inclosed.

The system of moderation towards the members and partizans of the former governments, which has been

[1] Boissy d'Anglas. See *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 190.

[2] February 6, peaceable possession was taken.

strongly recommended by the French Representatives from the moment of their arrival at Amsterdam, has hitherto been pursued with very few exceptions. At Utrecht, it is said the members of the ancient regency and several other persons have been put under arrest. The representatives of the people of Amsterdam have been instigated to imitate the example. They have not only resisted the impulse of private revenge, but have published an address to their fellow-citizens, detailing the motives of their conduct in this respect, and declaring the principles upon which their determination is founded to persist in their lenient treatment of the defeated party. There is indeed every reason to hope that this policy will not be abandoned so long as the Stadtholderian partizans remain quiet, and give no new occasion for severity.

February 21st. The answer of the French representatives to the deputations from the States General and the Provincial Assembly of Holland are now published. This country it seems is still to be at war.

A further proof of this appears in the resolution taken by the States General to notify their acknowledgment of the rights of man, abolition of the Stadtholdership, etc., to all their Ministers in foreign countries, together with the assurance that the people wish no other than a continuance of peace, except with respect to the courts of *Vienna, London* and *Berlin.*[1]

It appears probable that as soon as the revolution is effected, and the provisional administration established through the seven Provinces, a *National Convention* will be proposed for the formation of a Constitution. The present prevailing sentiment leads to the expectation that the separate sovereignties will be dissolved, and that of the

[1] This last phrase was an error, which was corrected in the next despatch.

Batavian people alone remain. It is to be observed that the ideas upon the subject of government in general of that which may be most suitable to the character and circumstances of this people are far from being settled. They do not even seem prepared for the elementary principles of universal suffrage. They have so long been habituated to exclusions upon political commercial and religious considerations, that it is questionable whether they will open the door of popular prerogatives so widely, as their general acknowledgment of the rights of man promises. In the elections for the provisional government the people have had no agency. The persons chosen are taken indiscriminately from all the Christian sects. But this political liberality did not extend to the appointment of any Jews, although they are very numerous in the Republic, and at Amsterdam constitute perhaps a fifth part of the population.

It is said that a considerable part of the French army in these provinces is to march as soon as possible upon an expedition against Hanover. They appear indeed desirous to withdraw all their troops from a country where at present they have no occasion to act, and where they will be in danger of contracting habits unfriendly to their discipline.

But if they quit this country, the aspect of internal affairs may perhaps be in some measure affected by their absence. They are certainly at present the strongest bond of union here, and as long as they remain the party opposed to the new order of things will be quiet and silent; the case will not be the same after their departure.

The fiscal of the Admiralty at Amsterdam and the Vice Admiral van Kinsbergen have been arrested. Several ships belonging to the East India Company, very richly laden,

were in the ports of England at the time when the French arrived here. They are now detained by an embargo.[1] The circumstance of their being in England is suspected to be not accidental.

Having had occasion twice to write to the President of the Provisional Assembly of Holland, in obedience to the article of my instructions which occasioned my correspondence with Mr. Lelyveld, a copy of which I had the honor of sending you some time since, I wrote in our own language. Mr. Paulus noticed the circumstance, and I find it is mentioned in the journals of the Assembly that the application I had made was in writing, "*though in the English language.*" It has to them the appearance of singularity, as all their other diplomatic correspondence is carried on in French, and it subjects them to some inconvenience because very few of them can read our language. I have never used it with any one of them without their mentioning it afterwards, but as I have not felt myself authorised to tell them it was in consequence of a positive instruction, I have never given them any reason for the practice. It has been one principal cause which has hitherto prevented me from writing on the subject of the consular question, as well as upon that of the heavier duties imposed upon our navigation than upon that of the European nations.[2]

I have lately received a letter from General Eustace at Paris. He assures me that he delivered to Mr. Monroe the letter which I had intrusted to him for you, so that I

[1] Two commissioners, Pasteur and Vitriarius, were sent to England to obtain the release of these vessels and cargoes, but did not succeed.

[2] The authorities allowed Adams's American letters to pass, "though under seal," a favor extended to no other letters, not even those of the States General to their own ministers. "They had consented to accommodate me, because they were well assured the minister of their friends and allies would not intrigue against them." Adams, *Memoirs*, February 12, 1795.

presume you will receive it in due time. The General in his letter insinuates that the *motives* of his return to France originated in his arrest while he was here. It is probable that he was employed by the Patriots of this country to concert measures between those at Paris and those in Holland, as well perhaps as to obtain favorable terms from their friendly conquerors. I am etc.

TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

HAGUE, February 22d, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I received Mr. Monroe's letter, mentioned to you by Mrs. Read, near a fortnight since. It is dated January 28th, but the day before that of Mr. Skipwith to you, but it does not contain a syllable upon the subject which he requests you to recommend, and indeed this affair appears to me so very mysterious, that I think it necessary at least to understand and be understood before I act.

I would write to the lady herself, was I not restrained by considerations of prudence. I must therefore request you to answer Mr. Skipwith by the first mail, that I fully concur in the sentiments and dispositions expressed in his letter to you, and that I am not only willing but anxiously desirous to contribute as far as in my power to the same purpose, but I have no discretionary authority whatever over my public monies; that if I had, it would be impossible for me to make any advance upon the single document he sent for me; that as the demand upon me expressly purports to be a *recurrence to our nation*, it asks what as the representative of the nation I have no power to grant; that, nevertheless, I will with pleasure take measures to have the sum demanded paid according to the request, if it is desired, but that in

order to enable me even to ask repayment from the American government, I must have some document to show that the charge is *equitable;* that at present I do not even know what the charge would be. That if the present state of affairs necessitates particular discretion, I will be content with an assurance from our Minister at Paris, from Mr. Skipwith, or from the lady herself, that I shall in future be provided with documents to warrant a solicitation for indemnity on my part. That if nothing of this can be done, I will, if the lady will consent, have the money paid and consider it as a private debt repayable by her or by whoever receives it.

I know not a human being upon earth entitled upon so many principles, and by such imperious obligations, to the exertions for relief of every American citizen, the inhabitants of Boston particularly, and of me individually, as the person to whom this demand may be supposed to allude; and it is painful to me that the request comes under circumstances which compel me to a moment's hesitation or delay. But compliance to the thing required of me is *impossible*, and I think I cannot execute another thing as a substitute, without knowing whether it will answer as such.[1] . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 27 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, February 25th, 1795.

. . . *March 5th.* The province of Friesland is now represented in the States General regenerated. That Assembly have appointed two Ministers Plenipotentiary

[1] This letter relates to a request made in favor of Madame de Lafayette, but her name was not mentioned.

to the French Republic,[1] one of them is the same person who some time since addressed the Convention as a Batavian Deputy. The object of their present commission is formally to demand again an alliance between the two Republics as free and independent nations.

Three of the Professors at the University of Leyden have been dismissed. One of them, Mr. Pestel, has been distinguished by several works relating to the Constitution of this Republic. Even the temple of the Muses is no sanctuary now, and the Patriots upon this occasion imitate an example of similar exclusion heretofore given by their adversaries.

The States General have published an address to the troops proposing to them a new engagement. By way of attaching them to the new system they promise that in future the soldiers shall not be subject to the discipline of blows, that they shall be free to marry without being obliged to obtain the permission of their captain, and that promotion in future shall be conferred only upon merit or experience, and not by favor.

Some of the adherents to the former government to counteract the operation of these regulations say, that they are not sufficiently liberal and think that the choice of the officers should also be conferred upon the troops.

The prospect of a general pacification, which has appeared opening during the course of the winter, becomes daily more distant and obscure. At present a campaign no less violent and bloody than the last appears probable. The Emperor, assisted by a loan of money made in England, and another loan at Vienna, together with a free gift from the States of Hungary, seems determined upon a last and

[1] Jaques Blauw, a former magistrate of the city of Gouda, and Gaspar Meyer, a former consul-general of the United Provinces at Bordeaux, were named ministers plenipotentiary near the French Republic to negotiate a treaty of alliance.

violent exertion to obtain honorable terms of peace from the French Republic. The King of Prussia negotiates for a general negotiation, and makes some scruple to sign a separate peace. He will perhaps continue the war through the ensuing season as he did through the last, and it is questionable whether the French will carry the war much further into his dominions.

One would not suppose that the present is a moment for indulging the ambition of *conquest* in this country. Yet from the vicinity of Westphalia and the Duchy of Oldenburg the dominant party contains individuals who are of opinion, that the French Republicans will very soon undertake and perform this conquest, and then annex these territories to the Batavian Republic. Some of them suppose that the expedition said to be directed against Hanover is really destined against East Friesland.

On the second of this month the States General took the resolution that the act of guaranty of the Stadtholdership passed in the year 1787 should be immediately burnt. They ordered their agent van Hees to commit the instrument to the flames in their presence. He preferred asking his dismission from the office he sustained, and his request was immediately granted. They appointed in his stead a person [1] who had been dismissed from the same station in consequence of the Revolution in 1787. . . .[2]

[1] W. Quarles.

[2] "The war with Great Britain can no longer be doubted, and indeed it has not for a long time been a subject of question in my mind. The preparations for a campaign as fiercely contested as the last appear to be making on all sides, and yet the combatants begin to parley. All most devoutly sigh for peace, and the remainder of the war will perhaps only prove a fruitless waste of human life.

"It appears to me that the value of our neutrality becomes doubly precious, and it has the singular advantage of being favoured by the interest of all the belligerent powers. As the friends of all, our commerce will be much more serviceable to each

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 28 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, March 17th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Our foreign communications except with France are still interrupted, so that I have neither the means of receiving or of conveying foreign intelligence. The Danish Minister here sends a courier who will pass through Hamburg, and by his kindness I have an opportunity to send my letters there, uncertain when they will go from thence.

As to this country a profound tranquility is the principal circumstance that characterises its present internal state. The States General still retain their forms and their name, for the purpose of preserving without intermission the chain of their connection with foreign nations; but the members who compose that assembly have undergone a total change.

of them than our assistance could be as confederates. If engaged on either side, we could give but little help to our party, and little annoyance to our enemy.

"I believe that the government of Great Britain has discovered that the policy of adding us to the number of their enemies would at the present juncture be unwise. If the treaty signed on the 19th of November has been ratified, it may prove the foundation of the return to that good understanding which our interest and inclinations equally lead us to preserve with all the commercial nations of Europe." *To Sylvanus Bourne*, March 12, 1795. Ms.

"As the vessels from America now arrive with some frequency, I presume you will pursue the plan, which you mentioned your intention of commencing with the new year. I wish the law required that the registers and manifests should all pass through the consul's hands, for I see no other practicable means of collecting the tables of our commerce in detail, which our government require. I should think, however, that the present situation of affairs, which necessitates perpetual applications to you, from the captains and merchants concerned in our commerce, offers a favorable opportunity to establish by degrees the custom of delivering the registers, which I think the law recommends, and which is really practiced in other ports, as in London for instance, where I understand it is universally complied with. Perhaps the good will of the broker might facilitate much the introduction of this salutary usage." *To Sylvanus Bourne*, March 14, 1795. Ms.

Six of the provinces are now represented under the new arrangements, and the representation from Zeeland may be expected daily to complete the confederacy, the former deputation having some time since been recalled.

This Assembly and the several Provincial Assemblies of the Republic are still employed in abolishing the institutions of the former Constitution and substituting other arrangements in their stead. The President of the Assembly of Holland, in a speech after the completion of his third presidence, mentions the general system upon which the Revolution is conducted. The exterior forms (he says) of the *Legislative part* of the Constitution are used to operate a complete change in the *Executive* part which, when new organized, will supply the means of effecting the same alteration in the Legislative.

The administration of the military force by sea and by land under the former Constitution was cumbrous, like all the rest of that system. It has now been simplified and put under the direction of single committees. Mr. Paulus is president of the Marine Committee, and as his talents for this administration have heretofore been found essentially serviceable to one of the Boards of Admiralty, it is expected that his talents will be of infinite service, as the sphere of their employment will now be co-extensive with the Republic.

The situation of this country's naval power has already been stated to you. The list of ships published by authority under the old government named forty-three men of war and thirty-five frigates as the number of the existing navy; of these not more than fifteen of each were in commission, and of those in commission not more than a third part are now fit for being sent into action. The foundation for a respectable force however exists, and the importance of this department for securing permanency to the revolution

is well known to those now having the direction of affairs, as appears very clearly by their placing the most prominent character of the Revolution at the head of it.

There is reason to suppose that the exertions which will unquestionably be directed to this question will be productive of effect more than appears to be expected. The system of neglecting the maritime force and suffering it to perish by degrees was essentially connected with, and the natural effect of, a subordinate intimacy with the self-entitled rulers of the waves. To court their friendship, to deprecate their resentment, or to secure their protection, nothing could be more effectual than to lay aside the means of being formidable to them; and, accordingly for the space of the last forty years, in peace and in war, whether leagued as allies, opposed as enemies, or indifferent as neutrals, the deadly torpor of a political opiate has incessantly been infusing into every vein and artery of this naval constitution, while the siren song of family affections has always been added to charm its sensations as they weakened, and gently soothe into the slumber of death.

But now an opposite system will undoubtedly direct the policy of this Republic, and the principal exertions of the nation will be applied to their maritime affairs. But nothing can be done without money, and the public treasuries are empty. A loan of eight millions is ordered to be furnished by the city of Amsterdam within the space of a month, at an interest of three and a half per cent, and will undoubtedly be furnished. Similar and proportionable contributions will, perhaps, be levied upon the other cities of the province. The burden may possibly be thought severe, but it will not be intolerable.

In the meantime the fate of the country still remains undecided. The French armies are still here as conquerors,

and the substance of independence is not so scrupulously observed as its forms. The property of the Stadtholder was considered for some time as being comprehended under the protection promised by the proclamation of the French Representatives, but it is now declared to have become the spoil of the conquerors. This arrangement however carries with it nothing very disagreeable to the present administration here. They are not much disposed to regard the losses of a family which they so cordially detest, and perhaps they think themselves well rid of an administration to property encumbered with debts beyond its value. This will prove no inconvenience to the French, who take the estate but leave the debts to be paid by the former owner.

By the forms of the present system, whatever the French government choose to have done is notified by the French Representatives here to the Assembly of the States General. They take their resolutions accordingly, and the execution is by the common authority of the country. For military affairs the generals possess the supremacy of notifying.

In the substance the people are subjected to the usual consequences of conquest. More than a hundred thousand soldiers are quartered among the people. It is a grievous affliction, but is borne with as much composure as may be expected. An heavy requisition of clothing and provisions has been levied. It was painful, but the articles were supplied. The greatest difficulty has been respecting the introduction and circulation of assignats. It was a favorite object here to obtain exemption from the necessity of making them forcibly current; people of all descriptions dreaded them, and it was for some time hoped that there would be an arrangement on the subject to give general satisfaction.

But the troops *must* be constantly supplied with sundry articles, and they had nothing but paper to pay for their

purchases. At length a law was enacted by the provisional assembly of Holland which directed the acceptance of the paper in payment for necessary articles furnished to the troops. The intention was to circumscribe the compulsive circulation within those limits, and the law declared that the holders of the paper under this regulation might deliver it over to the municipalities of the towns. The assignats are valued at nine stuivers to the livre, which is very nearly equivalent to the nominal value. But the latter part of the law is not hitherto executed, and the holders, of course, are not perfectly satisfied.

I am this day informed that the new deputies from Zeeland have taken their seats in the States General so that the representation under the new arrangement is complete from all the provinces. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 29 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, March 9 [19], 1795.

The course of affairs during the operation of so great a change as that which is taking place in this Republic naturally produces various extraordinary measures and regulations, some of which affect immediately more or less the interests of other nations. The dispositions of the new Administration are certainly very friendly towards the United States. They are not studious to contrive laws whose operation, though general in words, may point in reality against our commerce alone. They are not inclined to be employed as the instruments of others' hate, to injure us from subserviency, and to throw every possible impediment in our way from submission to others rather than from malevolence

against us. They are not the passive agents of a deliberate system to cramp the growth of the United States, and to delay as long as possible the inevitable day of their national power. They receive no impulse from external resentment or fear relative to the prosperity or the principles of the transatlantic Republic. But the necessities of their situation at the present moment have, in some instances, occasioned an interruption to the enjoyment of the neutral and stipulated rights of our fellow-citizens.

A law was published some time since relative to the circulation of the French assignats, and containing also a prohibition under severe penalties against the exportation of specie from this province. It forbids all persons going out of its bounds from carrying any more with them than a sufficiency (to be ascertained by the municipalities of the place from whence they depart,) for the expenses of their intended journies. There are at this time several citizens of the United States at Amsterdam who arrived lately, bringing with them sums of money with the intention of proceeding into Germany upon pursuit of their commercial affairs, and they have not been able to obtain permission from the municipality to take with them the money they brought here, upon the supposition that it is forbidden by the law before mentioned. Upon meeting with the difficulty from the municipality, Mr. Bourne wrote me requesting me to make application on the subject to the government here.

I saw the President of the Provisional Assembly of Holland and represented to him the circumstances, assuring him I was persuaded an erroneous construction had been given to the clause in the law, and that it was not intended to operate in a manner inconsistent with the stipulations contained in the treaty.

He said there was certainly no such intention. That there

was meant to be left a discretionary power with the municipalities to authorize strangers travelling through the country to carry with them whatever money they had brought into it. That if, however, the scruples of the municipality at Amsterdam should continue, it would still perhaps not be necessary for me to apply to the States General on the occasion, as the law would in all probability very soon be repealed. It was only a temporary regulation which had already answered as far as could be expected the purposes for which it was made, and was therefore no longer necessary.

Two American vessels arrived in the course of the winter at the Texel have hitherto been prevented by the ice from proceeding to Amsterdam.[1] At present the French commandants in the ports where they are, will not permit them to finish their voyage without passports from the representatives of the French people. Upon my mentioning this fact the President said it must be owing to some mistake. He said he would speak to the French representative, Alquier, the only one still remaining here, and requested me to do the same, if I thought proper, in order to remove this inconvenience at present and anything of the same kind in future.[2]

I requested of the Representative Alquier, first verbally, and afterwards in writing, an order to the commandants at the places where the two vessels are detained to permit them to depart and complete their voyage to Amsterdam, and also proposed to him to give a general order to all the French commandants in the ports of the Republic, by virtue of which the captains of vessels belonging to citizens of the United States may in future, upon presenting to the commandants their sea letters or passports prescribed in the treaty of commerce subsisting between the States General

[1] The *Concordia*, Captain Bysand, and the *Complanter*, Captain Cahoon.

[2] Adams, *Memoirs*, March 9, 1795.

and the United States, enjoy the liberty of commerce and the navigation stipulated in that treaty.

He said that as to the two vessels in particular, there could not be the smallest objection to the expedition of the passports, but that under the circumstances of the present moment an indispensable necessity dictated measures to prevent the departure of any vessels bound to foreign ports. "*We are yet in this country*" (said he) "*as conquerors, or at least we occupy it*, and we are obliged to employ some extraordinary means of precaution which we have concerted with the government here."

I told him that the United States being sincere and cordial friends to both the French and Dutch nations, I could assure him my fellow citizens would not be inclined to raise reclamations against the measures of prudence or precaution, which are commanded by the necessities of an extraordinary occasion, even if their operation should involve some temporary inconvenience to us. But at the same time I hoped and believed our friends would not extend these inconveniences any further than absolute necessity should require, and that every possible facility would be afforded to a commerce so beneficial to the interests of all parties.

He said that in the course of a short time, perhaps a few days, an entire liberty of navigation would be restored, and in the mean time, if any captains of American vessels were desirous of sailing and would inform me of their wishes, it might facilitate their departure. That no unnecessary restrictions would be imposed, and every possible facility be given.

The principle upon which the French have proceeded since their conquest of these provinces is, that they came as the friends of the people and the enemies of the government. One of its deductions is, that although they leave

private property untouched that of the government becomes the property of the conquerors, as well as that of the other governments with whom they are at war which they find here. And as part of this property consists in vessels laying in the several ports of the Republic, they think it necessary to allow none to depart without first ascertaining whether it is not, upon the system which they have adopted, an object of seizure.

March 24. A general arrangement is at length agreed to by the Representative Alquier, in consequence of which our navigation and commerce in this country will not, I presume, meet with any further obstructions. I inclose herewith a copy of my correspondence with him on this subject, and of his order to the commandants.

Although this correspondence does not come within the article of my instructions which prescribes to me the exclusive use of our own language, I am not without my apprehensions that, in using any other language upon *any* occasion when I write in my official capacity, I may be really departing in some measure from the system upon which that direction was given me. Your instructions in this instance command me not to lose a particular right, and so far I shall certainly follow them. If it is the intention of the President that I shall never vary from the exercise of the right, I shall scrupulously observe the order from the moment it shall be notified to me.

If it be an established maxim of the Government of the United States that all the correspondence of their servants shall invariably be carried on in their own language, it shall never be varied from by me after I shall once be informed of the fact. As this inference may be drawn, though it is not indispensable from that clause of my instructions, I have thought myself authorized on these occasions to use the

French, as an accommodation to the persons to whom I wrote, and have therefore always written to the French representatives here in that language.

I have had occasion repeatedly to make application to them upon occurrences so inconsiderable as not to deserve a particular notification of them to you, and in which nothing more than some particular convenience of an individual fellow-citizen was to be obtained. They have always required a demand in writing, but upon every occasion I have found them ready to give every facility that has been required of them in behalf of citizens of the United States, and their assurances of good will and fraternity, which never fail of being repeated with the utmost apparent cordiality, have hitherto been as invariably attended by the substantial proofs of their sincerity in the compliance with everything demanded of them.

I have the honor, &c.[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, April 1, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Since the date of my last letter, February 12, nothing very material has taken place in this country. The customary tranquility has been uninterrupted, and the Patriots of the present day have been proceeding with moderation towards their first object, the annihilation of the government that has hitherto existed.[2]

[1] With the country in the singular position of being at the same time *conquered* and *independent*, the regulations proved at times confusing. The American minister was obliged to treat with two authorities, the government of the country and the Representative of France, and in treating with the latter his functions appeared to deal with questions properly under the American minister to France, James Monroe. No dispute over authority arose between the two ministers.

[2] "With respect to internal arrangements, the *Revolution* is to be considered as distinct from the *Conquest*. The principles may be conceived from the following

I say the Patriots of the present day, because the party is not exactly the same, as it was in the time of your residence here. The operators of the present revolution are to be considered rather as a detachment from the old Patriots, whose principles they have abandoned altogether and substituted others in their stead.

This circumstance gives the clue to account for the total silence and obscurity in which such men as Mr. Van Berckel, Van der Capellen, Gyzelaer, and many others, formerly considered as the principal characters of the patriotic party and the greatest sufferers by the Stadtholder's victory in 1787, have continued and still continue amid the great political changes now taking place in their country. One

statement. The French nation, having conquered the Stadtholderian government, establish the *Liberty* of the Batavian people, who receive this blessing from their hands as a present. The first use they make of it is to abolish every part of the conquered government, reserving only the States General for the present, in order to preserve without interruption their relations with foreign nations. The municipal governments are all destroyed, provisional municipalities, elected by the people, are substituted in their stead. Provincial assemblies are constituted, consisting of deputies from the new municipalities. The provincial assemblies abolish the former provincial states, and all their appendages, as also the Stadtholdership of each province. The States General, who are continued merely in point of form, consist of deputations from the provincial assemblies. So that the change of *men* is *universal;* of forms considerable, but not total; of *substance* very small indeed." *To William Short*, March 31, 1795. Ms.

"It is well known to you that secrecy is considered as an essential ingredient of the commercial policy of this country. It forms the character of their public institutions, and it is taught as an elementary principle of education. No details of commerce are published by authority. The public offices are not gratuitously or legally accessible. The only source of information on this head is, the knowledge of individuals. There are great numbers of merchants who are in possession of the information, but whose habits and principles are equally powerful to persuade them from making any communications. This system of concealment so universally prevails, that the subject upon which men of genius, science and general information in this country, other than professional merchants, are found to be the least informed, is that of the national commerce." *To the Secretary of State*, April 2, 1795. Ms.

article of creed at the present day is, that all the dissensions in the Republic heretofore have merely been struggles for power and office between two cabals, a wicked faction with Orange and a wicked faction without; that both have been equally regardless of the rights of man and the happiness of the people; that now the *principles* are changed, and the sacred love of universal liberty is the only motive which inspires the actors upon the scene.

The ancient Constitution therefore must be destroyed, or rather it vanishes before the light of a single luminous principle. It was founded on the rights of princes, of nobles, of corporations, of the church, in short upon a motley jumble of every possible right, except the only rights upon which any legitimate government can rest, the rights of man.

Such is the present logic of the party. It has been adopted by the great number of the ancient Patriots, because it is conformable to the fashionable doctrines of their liberators, and because it is supposed there is a seed of rapid propagation contained in it which will strengthen the party with numerous additions from the populace, who have generally been partizans of the House of Orange.

But the reasoning is not conclusive to the minds of all the old Patriots. They say that the theory of their government was indeed absurd. But that in affairs of government, as well as others, the pride of human reason must often submit to the lessons of experience. That under this government, cumbrous and inaccurate as it was, the people have enjoyed two hundred years of prosperity. That it secures to the possession of every individual a greater share of personal liberty, a greater degree of security to property, and a more liberal range of opinions, than has commonly been found in other governments hitherto. In short they adhere still to the ancient Constitution, and reluct at a total change

upon the usual and natural reasons which operate against violent political innovations.

Thus you will observe, Sir, that a schism among the Patriots has taken place, similar to that which in England has been noticed by the distinction between the new and the old Whigs. But as far as private opinions, compressed and restrained by an armed force, can be traced, the Patriots have not gained real strength in point of numbers by this change of principles.

Under the prevalence of the new theory all the former functionaries have been removed. The ancient forms have been abandoned or retained, according to the dispositions of the several new institutions. Instead of the Provincial States provisional assemblies to represent the people have been formed in all the provinces, and all pompous titles are laid aside, except those belonging to the States General, which are retained only for the purpose of preserving the relations of the country uninterrupted with foreign nations.

A committee of the States General is appointed already to draw up and present a plan for the formation of a National Convention, to represent and to make a constitution for the whole people.

The jealousies of towns and of provinces will impede the formation of such a government still more than the animosities of party. *Facilis descensus Averno.* The Patriots have hitherto done nothing but cut away and pull down. If they really intend to erect a Republic one and indivisible, founded upon universal suffrage, a single assembly and committees, which appears to be their plan, they will not succeed.

I mentioned in my last letter that on the arrival of the French Representatives at Amsterdam, they published a proclamation declaring the liberty and sovereignty of the Batavian people, and at the same time expressing the inten-

tion of the friendly invaders to repress all excesses *between the inhabitants*. They have carried this intention into full effect, and indeed the precaution was necessary. Their interference has more than once been requisite, to preserve individuals of the defeated party from severe treatment, to say the least.

The recollection of the past and anticipation of the future equally contribute to exasperate the present possessors of power against their adversaries. It is remembered that the victory in 1787 was not enjoyed with moderation. It is foreseen that violent struggles will be made in future to recover what has recently been lost. The possibility of a return to the former dominion is affectedly denied, and hence its probability is forcibly felt. The conquered partizans emboldened by the lenient treatment they experience do not disguise their hopes, and as their only present consolation, love to intimidate by threats. Revenge and terror rankle in the hearts of those who have suffered from oppression, and are now in possession of power. They are restrained from action only by the presence of their armed liberators, and the tranquility of the country has no security so effectual as the protection of the French armies.

The States General have appointed two ministers plenipotentiary, to solicit and negotiate an alliance with the French Republic.[1] They have been some time at Paris, but have not yet been received in their characters by the National Convention.

A war with Great Britain is supposed to be inevitable. The naval force of this Republic was found reduced beyond all imagination. The five admiralties have been abolished in common with all the other institutions of the ancient constitution.

[1] See p. 259 *supra*.

The administration of maritime affairs is intrusted to a Marine Committee, and upon the new organization of the navy only six ships of the line have been put in Commission.

The finances were found in a state of ruin, rather than of disorder. The want of money was perhaps purposely prepared by the former government, by way of precaution. To provide for present necessities, a loan of eight millions has been imposed upon the city of Amsterdam, and similar resources may be sought from the other parts of the Republic.

The military preparations, however, proceed with languor, and meet with numerous difficulties, and the necessity of peace is forcibly felt here and in every part of Europe.

The neutral navigation and commerce is freed from its former shackles and invited by encouragements. The States General have removed all prohibitions. In this Province flour and rye meal will be admitted free from duties during the course of the present year. The scarcity of grain and flour is great throughout Europe. In France it is extreme.

Paris has again been in a state of agitation. The Convention seems to lose its popularity. They have very lately passed a law to provide against the case of their own dissolution by violence. It enjoins on the contingency of such an event, that the members who may escape from the hands of the assassins, together with the complementary members from the departments, shall assemble at Châlons sur Marne, and collect from the several armies a force to protect their deliberations. By the last accounts from Paris the city was more quiet than it had been a few days before.

The rumors of peace between France and Prussia are frequent, but not yet authenticated. The event is considered, however, as probable. It appears certain at least

that the Prussian army has been withdrawn from the banks of the Rhine, and that the French troops have retired from the Prussian dominions bordering on this country.[1]

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 32 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, April 7th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The Provincial Assembly of Holland have published a law requiring the inhabitants to furnish all their plate to be coined for public use.

The plenipotentiaries in France have not yet been admitted by the Convention. It is supposed they meet with difficulties which prevent the conclusion of the proposed alliance. The Patriots say that it is only a disagreement as to certain articles to be inserted in the treaty. The other party pretend that the alliance has been peremptorily refused.

A few days since a report was circulated at the same time

[1] "The manner in which all the present authorities in this country were formed opens an inevitable source of discussion and dissension as to the limits of their several functions. All the forms and many of the principles of the ancient constitution were abandoned. A semblance of approximation towards popular forms was substituted, but no permanent principles have hitherto been established." As an example he cites an oath of fidelity prescribed by the Provincial Assembly, to be taken by the members of the several municipalities, and also by all their executive agents. Amsterdam and Leyden objected, and the latter protested on the ground that "the Government is at present merely provisional, the child of the moment, and was never intended to be established as the constitutional government of the country; that it is very unequal in its principle, as it gives to the most inconsiderable village in the province a number of suffrages equal to that of the representation from the capital." The answer to this protest was the arrest of Schimmelpenninck and five other members of the municipality. *To the Secretary of State*, March 27, 1795. Ms.

throughout the province, that peace was concluded between France and Prussia, that by one of its articles the French had stipulated that their troops should all be withdrawn from this country, that in consequence of this agreement they had already begun to quit the frontier, and that as they retired they were immediately followed by the Prussians, who would very soon be at the gates of Amsterdam. It was propagated with so much industry and believed with so much credulity, that in all the large cities the partizans of the former government began to lay aside the three-colored cockade; the songs peculiar to the party were publicly sung, and the symptoms of seditious practices were so great that it became necessary to keep nightly patroles in the streets, and to make examples among the populace of those who had been the most conspicuous in instigating the disorders. There can be no doubt that this popular fermentation was purposely raised by way of experiment, but by whom does not appear, nor indeed is it easy to discover from which of the parties it was provoked.

It serves to show the degree of stability usually attributed to the present government, when a mere report, destitute of probability no less than of foundation, could produce riotous appearances throughout the province. A judgment may be formed what would be the consequence of the French army's withdrawing in reality.

The destiny of this country may be represented in a very few words, submission to a foreign military or civil war. A foreign power may govern very peaceably in the name of either party, but neither has sufficient strength to rule in quiet without external assistance.

The party now in employ, though probably the most numerous of the two, needs this assistance still more than the other because, having no center of union, no constant attrac-

tive force drawing them together, they are discordant among themselves. They can assimilate only for purposes of hostility against the other party, their common enemy. But the moment they become victorious all the jealousies of provinces, of towns, of individuals and families, assume their full force, impede every measure proposed, and render their government languid, lifeless and, in the eyes of the people, contemptible.

The truth of this observation has been proved by the perpetual tenor of this nation's history since its existence as a republic. Every occurrence of the present times tends to the same issue. In my letter written before the catastrophe of the late government mention was made of the general principles upon which the Patriots then proposed to erect their Constitution on the ruins of the Union of Utrecht. At the first moment of the revolution in the transports of joy common to all the party, there were some appearances which indicated an united intention to dissolve all the particular corporate privileges and distinctions into the general mass by a new Constitution founded upon universal liberty and equality. Hence the acknowledgements of the rights of man and citizens proclaimed by all the Assemblies. Hence the original resolutions of the Provincial Assembly that the suffrages of that body should in future be counted by persons and not by cities; hence the *forms* of popular election observed in constituting the present authorities.

This unanimity prevailed only during the moment of mutual gratulation. The same Assembly which had established the maxim of personal suffrage contrary to the practice of the former States of the Province, which had admitted representatives from all the villages unrepresented in the States, which had declared the sovereignty to be the right of the whole people and equality to be that of all

individuals, within a month afterwards decided that Amsterdam might send what number of representatives its municipality thought proper, but that only four of them could be allowed to vote. The same number of votes is allowed to each of the other cities, so that the comparative representation of Amsterdam is reduced even lower than it was under the former government.

The municipality of Amsterdam was dissatisfied with this decision, but submitted without remonstrating upon the presumption that the provisional Assembly would soon be dissolved, and that under the new arrangement the capital would be entitled to a representation proportionable to its population. But soon after the provisional Assembly prescribed an oath of fidelity to themselves, and required it should be taken by all the members of the subordinate authorities. The municipality of Amsterdam refuse to take the oath and an open breach ensues between them and the provisional Assembly. This circumstance has already been related. The arrested members have since been released, a suspension rather than accommodation of the difference has been mutually consented to. Some concessions have been made on both sides, but the oath has not been taken, and the parties are not satisfied with each other. The root of bitterness is planted and will shoot out in every direction.

The same spirit of jealousy has already manifested itself between the provinces. The total deficiency in the finances, general and particular, has been represented, and is equally felt by all the members of the Union, but they do not agree upon the measures to be taken for filling the public coffers. Six of the provinces in the States General have consented to the proposal of opening a loan of twelve millions of guilders in the name of the Union. But the province of Holland has

declared itself very explicitly against this proposition because the burden of the debt would fall upon that province only, and the Provisional Assembly have substituted to answer the same purpose the law demanding all the gold and silver of the inhabitants with certain exceptions. The express condition is, however, annexed to the execution of this law that it shall be adopted by the other provinces, which will probably not be complied with. The treasuries will still remain empty and other resources will be suggested, discussed, and rejected.

This call for gold and silver is already received very unfavorably within the province. The municipality of Amsterdam consider it as bearing with unequal weight upon that city; the regencies of the other cities, consisting generally of persons upon whom this tax will operate more than upon the mass of the people, will raise objections against it, and the legislative assembly will again be obliged to hunt for expedients. If a suspicion should arise from these observations that the affairs of the country are seen through a prejudiced medium by the writer, the perusal of an address from the States General to the several provincial Assemblies will serve to shew how far the facts are demonstrated, and how far the opinions are rational. It is contained in the *Leyden Gazette* herewith inclosed.

The consequence of this internal disunion proceeding from many different sources is that the country *must* be governed by a foreign power. The harmony, which has hitherto subsisted between the French government and that which has arisen under their auspices here, is already less cordial than it was in the beginning. But in the supposable case of a difference between them the reasons of France will necessarily prevail. Under the present circumstances their protection is indispensable and must therefore be purchased

at any price. The reports still prevail of an armistice between France and Prussia. The French army of Sambre and Meuse have withdrawn from Emmerich, and retired from the Prussian dominions bordering on this country. The Prussian Army has also quitted the banks of the Rhine and marched into Westphalia. The sieges of Luxemburg and Mentz are, at present, the only military operations going forward in this quarter, but it is expected the campaign will soon open more extensively, and on the part of Great Britain and the Empire it will be pursued, it is said, with the peculiar energy that characterizes the last effort for the attainment of a favorite object.

I am with great respect, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

[Oliver Wolcott]

The Hague, April 10th, 1795.

Sir:

Upon my arrival at Amsterdam in November last, the situation of the funds of the United States in Europe and the established mode whereby provision was made for satisfaction of the calls for payments of interest so frequently returning at Amsterdam and at Antwerp were altogether unknown to me. As the subject had not been mentioned in my instructions I presumed that it was not considered as requiring particular attention from me, and as the circumstances have rendered some intervention on my part necessary, I take the liberty of inclosing herewith my correspondence relative to the payment of the interest due in December upon the Antwerp loan.

During my first visit to Amsterdam one of the holders of the Antwerp obligations, who was at that time a refugee

from Brabant, came to me and inquired whether the interest usually paid by Mr. De Wolf in December could not be paid at Amsterdam or elsewhere. I mentioned the circumstances to Mr. Hubbard, and then learnt from him that the interest payable by Mr. De Wolf had hitherto been annually remitted by the Amsterdam bankers, but that it had not been sent as usual for the payment then approaching.

Within a few days after the 1st of December I had several applications from the creditors of the Antwerp loan similar to that I have already mentioned. I thought it necessary to pay attention to a circumstance which might interest in some measure the credit of the United States, and wrote on the 7th of the month to the bankers at Amsterdam, as may be seen together with their answer in the papers inclosed, marked No. 1.

As they had not received their usual orders to remit the money, and I had no authority to give them, the matter rested in this situation until the 31st of the same December. They wrote me that they had then received their orders to make the remittance, and had informed Mr. De Wolf they would supply him so soon as the remittance should be allowed by the government of this country. The engagement to make the remittance was considered by me as sufficiently positive, but it was made contingent. The obstacle arising from the prohibitions of the government here had not been mentioned before, and I presumed it was not insuperable; but it strongly confirmed me in the opinion I had already formed, that my particular attention to this business would be proper and necessary, though I had no particular instructions relative to it.

I knew the remittance was still impracticable, not for the reason mentioned in their letter, but from another fact of

which I had recently been informed and which is noticed in my answer to the Bankers dated January 13th. This letter and answer together with their reply are comprised within the mark No. 2 of the inclosed copies.

On the 19th of January the French troops arrived at Amsterdam, and from that time the communication with Antwerp was restored and the prohibition against the transmission of money ceased. On the same day I had with Messrs. William Willink and Hubbard a conversation in which the former gentlemen made the observations which I related in the last letter I had the honor of writing you, dated February 2d. These observations were variant from the letter of December 31st, new reasons were alleged for not pursuing orders received, and I was convinced beyond all question that my particular attention to the affair had become an essential part of my duty. But all the same I had so little hope of obtaining the transmission of the money that in my letter of February 2, will be found my decided opinion, that in case Mr. De Wolf should soon be liberated the payment of interest due on his loan would depend upon his power to *advance* the money.

Though the observations of Mr. Willink so soon after the letter of December 31st were somewhat unexpected, I thought it unnecessary to enter upon a discussion on the subject, and observed only that Mr. De Wolf being in captivity it was still impossible to send him the money, and while I expressed my full approbation of several other arrangements which they had taken at that critical period, and which they communicated to me, at the same time I kept an entire silence as to this particular determination.

On the 11th of March I was informed that Mr. De Wolf was again at liberty, had returned to Antwerp, and was expecting the remittance from Amsterdam to pay his inter-

ests due in December. I wrote the next day to the bankers, and a correspondence ensued, marked No. 3 in the within copies, which terminated in a positive refusal by them to send the money to Mr. De Wolf. This was indeed what I had expected, and what I presumed it would be impossible for me to counteract, destitute as I was of orders and even of authority.

Hitherto there had been no communication whatever between Mr. De Wolf and me upon this business, but at the same time when the letter from Amsterdam of 17 March was delivered to me I also received one from him of the 16, the copy of which herewith sent is marked No. 4.

I did not feel myself authorized to accept the proposal to borrow money at an interest for this payment, but the offer gave me an argument which I was persuaded would be more convincing to the minds of our bankers in engaging them to make the remittance than anything I had before been able to use. A second correspondence took place, the copies of which are under the mark No. 5, the result of which was that they authorized Mr. De Wolf to draw upon them for the money.

The remaining copies within, marked No. 6, are of letters which afterwards passed between Mr. De Wolf and me. They only serve to show the termination of the business. From the perusal of the whole correspondence an accurate judgment may be formed of the *dispositions*, at Amsterdam relative to the Antwerp loan, and from the whole course of circumstances which have occurred in this transaction I am obliged to repeat an observation made in my last letter, that nothing beyond the line of the most rigorous duty will ever by done by those gentlemen to facilitate the payment of that interest. I may add that so far as the punctual fulfillment of that obligation is an object worthy of attention

to the United States, and so long as it is made dependent upon any agency of theirs, it becomes indispensable to give them no plausible reason to hesitate a moment in making the remittances according to their order.

Since the affair was finished I have received the letters which you did me the honor of writing me on the 1st and 5th of December last with the duplicate and triplicate at the same time. They came with a letter from Mr. Pinckney urgently demanding a remittance of 303,115 [florins] according to the bill of which your letters advised me. I wrote to the gentlemen at Amsterdam on the subject. They have answered Mr. Pinckney, and sent him a draft for £3000 sterling, as being the only unengaged balance belonging to the United States in their hands.

They suppose that the principal object of the bill was to place the funds out of the reach of danger, and as the danger which might be contemplated at the time when the bill was drawn is now past, they think it unnecessary to send the whole amount of the bill. I presume from your favor of December 5th and from Mr. Pinckney's letter to me, that the money was intended for some particular employment, but when they say they have not the money to send, the only part left for me is acquiescence.

There will considerable payments become due on the first of June. I presume the gentlemen at Amsterdam will be prepared for them.

The two millions which were proposed to be borrowed to be at the disposition of the Minister at Lisbon seem to be altogether out of the question. The previous advice from him has not been received, and could probably not be followed by a successful loan if it were. Business of all kinds is very much at a stand. There is at the present moment no sort of confidence in anything, but perhaps that of public

loans is more essentially impaired than any other.[1] Besides the calls for money for internal exigencies are so numerous and so imperious, that there is no prospect of a return of the superfluity from whence the public loans were heretofore supplied.

I have taken occasion from my correspondence with Mr. De Wolf to inquire of him, whether there is any probability that a loan of two or three millions may become practicable at Antwerp very soon. His answer makes the circumstance dependent upon a variety of contingencies, some more and some less probable than others. He has however requested to correspond occasionally with me upon the subject of American credit, and I presume will give me the earliest intimation of any occurrence that may take place favorable to the success of any loan that might be proposed.

The zeal of our bankers at Amsterdam for the honor and interest of the United States needs no stimulus, but it will never be more active than while credit may be obtained and is deserved at Antwerp.

I have the honor, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 33 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, April 14, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The popular commotions at Paris mentioned in a late letter, of which the scarcity of provisions is represented as the pretence, and the intrigues of the Jacobin party as the cause, became from day to day more alarming until the first of the present month, on which day a very numerous col-

[1] American 5 per cent stock was quoted at 92, though the interest was nearly due. In June they reached 97 @ 98 ex interest.

lection of people forced the doors of the Convention, filled the Hall of its session for several hours, interrupted every member who addressed them by vociferations for bread, and finally retired upon information that the armed force of Paris was marching to the relief of the Convention. When the freedom of deliberation was restored to the Assembly they declared the city of Paris to be in a state of siege, and gave the command of the *Parisian army* to General Pichegru, who happened then to be in Paris, where he had recently arrived to concert arrangements for the ensuing campaign, previous to his assuming the command of the Army of Rhine and Moselle. The most liberal extension was given to his powers for the purpose of restoring order and tranquility, but this special authority was to continue only so long as the danger which existed.[1]

The process which had been carried on with certain formalities against the four members[2] of the former Committees was abruptly broken off, and a decree was passed that they should be immediately transported out of the Republic.

Eight members among the most violent of the remaining Jacobins were ordered to be arrested and sent to the castle of Ham in Picardy, and although every effort was made to prevent the execution of these decrees yet it was finally effected, and on the 5th instant nine more members of the Convention were ordered under arrest. From the most recent accounts it appears that the public tranquility is restored, and that General Pichegru was on the point of setting out to join the army.

The object of those by whom this insurrection was instigated is generally said to have been the dissolution of the

[1] Insurrection of 12 Germinal (April 1), the reaction from the Jacobin "terror."

[2] Barrère, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes and Vadier.

Convention. It is probable that the subsequent purpose was very different among those who combined together in this transaction; that of the Jacobins to restore the reign of popular societies and Revolutionary Committees, and that of the Royalists to crown the infant prisoner in the Temple. That a plan of the latter kind was connected with the events of that day appears probable from various circumstances. I have already mentioned the symptoms of sedition and prelude to insurrection, which took place at the same moment throughout this province. It is now known that it appeared equally in the other provinces of this Republic, and it was on the same day and at the same hour when the attack was made upon the Convention at Paris. What connection it had with any Prussian negotiation now on foot is impossible for me to discover. The armistice between the Prussian and French armies had at that time commenced. The French had quitted the Prussian territories beyond the Rhine on the frontiers of this country. The Prussian army under General Mollendorf was marching into Westphalia. A report was propagated with a confidence which seemed to make the very improbability of the fact an argument for its truth, that the French armies in this country would immediately withdraw, and that the Prussians were already within this territory.

This conjuration of Prussians was it seems equally used at Paris, where it was reported there were 30,000 of them in the Bois de Boulogne, only four miles out of the city; and absurd as the story was, a member of the Committee of Surety General thought it necessary to go personally to the place in order to ascertain what was the fact.

There is indeed a negotiation of public notoriety proceeding between French and Prussian ministers at Basle, and the present armistice is generally supposed to be simply prelimi-

nary to the conclusion of a peace. If the hopes of the Orangeists or the fears of the Patriots here, hopes and fears neither of which are avowed, but which neither party can disguise, could be admitted as proofs, it would be certain that the situation of this country is the principal object of their negotiations. In every other respect the parties are supposed to be agreed.

The hopes of the ancient Court party are that the French by the treaty will stipulate to withdraw their troops and, without interfering with the affairs of this people, merely abandon the party triumphant hitherto by their protection. This is all they wish, and they are perfectly sanguine that in such case the Stadtholder would be restored and the present government annihilated in less than a week of time.

On the other hand the plenipotentiaries have not been received by the Convention, and the Committee of Public Safety with whom they are negotiating demand conditions to the conclusion of the alliance almost impossible to perform, and which have given an alarm to the Patriots, which is the more plainly seen from the endeavours to conceal it. One hundred millions of guilders to be paid in specie, a loan of an equal sum, the ships which compose the relics of their navy, the fortresses on their frontiers, such are the demands which though now reduced by one-half are still considered as an intolerable price for an alliance that is indispensable. Yet even these terms will be submitted to, grievous as they are, if the alternative is to be abandoned to their own defence. The French government can undoubtedly prescribe its own conditions, but if they insist upon receiving even the one hundred millions, they must promise the services of their armies here to ensure the collection of the money.

The disunion among the people here and their dissatis-

faction with the government as it now stands increase from day to day. The calling of a national convention is yet much talked of, but the present possessors of government do not appear anxious to be relieved from their burden of public authority, or to lay aside the extraordinary weight of responsibility that rests upon men who, under a semblance of popular election not remarkably accurate or regular, have torn up by the roots an ancient Constitution, and established in its stead a temporary dominion, equally variant from the former practice and the present theory, a dominion the measures of which must perpetually recur for justification or excuse to the *necessity of the case*, and which nothing but the present prospect of its speedy termination renders for a moment tolerable.

At any rate, and under any course of events now within the bounds of probability, this Republic may be said to be irretrievably ruined. For besides the sums required by France, one hundred and twenty-five millions of guilders are necessary to supply the payment of arrearages due by the former government. With a commerce stagnated, with manufactures scarcely extant, with public payments suspended, with a country which has just suffered the invasion of an enemy, and the most destructive protection of an ally, subjected at once to ravages of war and the ruin of inundations, with a people divided into two parties, nearly equal, inveterate against nothing so much as one another, with a dominant party discordant among themselves and a national character timid, irresolute, averse to sacrifices and considering property as the most precious of all human blessings, the most sanguine Patriot can discover in the future destiny of this country nothing but subjection, aggravated by the recollection of its former glories, and wretchedness, embittered by the memory of its former opulence.

The expedition from Toulon supposed to have been intended against Corsica is abandoned. A partial engagement between the French and English squadrons in the Mediterranean has taken place. The former have lost two ships of the line and taken one.

The misunderstanding between the courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin becomes more accredited from day to day, and it is probable that the King of Prussia has reason to take umbrage from a negotiation, the object of which is an alliance between Austria, Russia and Great Britain.

It is this day reported that a courier has arrived, bringing to the French Representatives in this place intelligence, that a peace has been concluded between the Republic of France and the King of Prussia.[1]

I received two days since a letter from Mr. Pinckney of March 30th, in which he mentions his intention to proceed in about a fortnight from that time upon his mission to Madrid. He sent me by the same conveyance a packet from the Department of State containing the newspapers to the 19th of December.

I have the honor &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

THE HAGUE, April 25, 1795.

. . . . . .

It has not been without difficulty that the *ardour* of the popular Societies has been suppressed by the supèrior energy of their new ally's friendly counsels. These popular Societies seem destined every where to grow as a monstrous wen upon the body of Liberty. In this country there is scarce a town or village ever so small in which they have

[1] A treaty was signed April 5.

not sprung up since the Revolution; but hitherto they have been harmless, because they have been impotent. When the French armies entered the province of Holland, the commissioners of the Convention published a proclamation promising to respect the independence of the Batavian people, but declaring at the same time that they would repress all excesses *between the inhabitants*. The only occasions upon which they have been obliged to carry this determination into effect has been furnished by the popular Societies.

It has been more than once proposed to me, and even urged upon me to become a member of that which has been formed in this place. I have excused myself upon the ground of being a stranger, and of the impropriety which I should commit in taking any part personally in the politics of the country. This answer has been sufficient, but not satisfactory. The Patriots here say that *they* are our only friends; that the Orange party detest us, and therefore that we are not equitable in preserving a neutrality between them.

As to the dispositions of the Orangeists, there is too much truth in the assertion of their adversaries. The Court party, and all the former governing party here, never look upon the United States but with eyes of terror and aversion, sometimes shaded with a veil of affected indifference, and sometimes attempted to be disguised under a mask of respect and veneration. I speak not of an universal sentiment. There are exceptions among the thinking and respectable part of the faction; but my reference is to the general sentiment of that class. I have had repeated opportunities of observing it, and if the situation of the whole party had been such as to admit of any sentiment relative to them but compassion, I believe I should have been disposed before this

to return them all their gall, and to exult in the foundation of their fears. But their humiliations, from the time when I arrived to this day, have been such as would disarm any enmity but that of party. I have therefore invariably avoided every act that could be charged with partiality favorable to the *Patriots*, as against the others, not from regard to them, but to my own duty.[1]

It was, therefore, unnecessary for me to look for motives to justify my refusal, to the principles upon which I have an aversion to political popular Societies in general. To destroy an established power these Societies are undoubtedly an efficacious instrument. But in their nature they are fit for nothing else, and the reign of Robespierre has shewn what use *they* make of power when they obtain its exercise. . . .

Our American Jacobins, I imagine, will be puzzled to fix upon their creed as to French affairs. I question whether they will give at full length the debates in the Convention of the present time. If they do, you will perceive that Jacobin Clubs, Sans Culottism, *Demagogie* (if *we* have no word to express this idea, it is not for want of the thing,) and all the madness and all the hypocrisy, which it was so long a fashion to profess and to admire, are now rated at their true value. There is however one fundamental political error, from which France has not yet recovered; it is the unqualified submission, and the unwise veneration for the *opinion publique*, which is in its nature inconsistent with any regular permanent system of government or of policy. Until they have the courage to explode this doctrine, they will not only be without a constitution, but totally destitute of the means of forming one. . . .

[1] Adams, *Memoirs*, February 12, 1795.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 35 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

AMSTERDAM, May 1st, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The immediate destiny of this country remains unsettled, and as no events of material importance become public, there is little intelligence to be given that deserves communication. The fate of this country and indeed of all Europe appears to be suspended upon operations, the course of which is not at present discovered. Curiosity, faction, and interest are busied in every part of Europe to penetrate, to color, and to invent measures of policy for the sovereigns of this hemisphere. Every hour of the day has its rumor, which becomes more or less accredited, and among the numerous and contradictory reports which are all circulated with the same degree of confidence, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between those which are founded in truth, and those that are false.

My last letters have mentioned the circumstance of attempts at sedition, practised at the same time on the first day of the last month at Paris and Amsterdam, as well as in many other parts of France and Holland. The immediate occasion which produced the riotous symptoms here was a report, that peace had been concluded between France and the King of Prussia, and that the French had by the treaty at least determined to abandon the party who have recently under their auspices effected a revolution of government here. It was indeed true that at that time a treaty of peace was upon the point of conclusion between those two powers, and that it has since been signed and ratified. But its public articles contain no arrangement whatever relative to this Republic. It is probable that the secret articles

are equally silent upon the subject, or that they postpone the definitive arrangement until the period of a general pacification.

But the present government find themselves very much distressed by the situation of their affairs. The alliance with France which they have been so long soliciting is not made; the conditions for it amount to no less than a considerable dismemberment of a territory already so small as to be very ill qualified to suffer diminution. The mutual dissatisfaction between the parties is daily increasing. The demands which have been made by the Committee of Public Safety as the basis of the alliance are so great, so burdensome to the interests, and so derogatory to the independence of the people, that the opinion is not without plausibility, which supposes they are intended only for the purpose of postponing any positive engagement whatever, and that the French policy is to keep the affairs of this country really in their own hands, so that they may be at any time arranged in such a manner as may be most advantageous to the interest of France.

The King of Prussia, besides his intimate and double connection with the Stadtholderian family, is with Great Britain bound by the treaty to support the Constitution of this Republic as it was settled in 1787. The party of the former government here became more and more sanguine in their hopes that he will restore the Stadtholder by means of an armed force. They are still convinced that it has been a subject of negotiation in the late treaty, and that the French have by secret articles consented to the return of the Stadtholder. The universal opinion of the party is in itself of no weight. The utmost extravagance of a fairy tale is the essence of probability, in comparison with the stories which these people receive and propagate with equal eager-

ness every hour of the day. But in this instance there are circumstances which serve to give at least a color of plausibility to their hopes. The most important of these circumstances are the difficulty raised against the conclusion of the French alliance and the conduct of the King of Prussia. With respect to the first I have mentioned the reasoning that is held; the latter has certainly a suspicious appearance to say no more. The army under General Mollendorf is stationed in Westphalia, close upon the frontiers of this country and within three days march of Amsterdam. The question is why has that Army been placed there? It is not an usual station for an army, and since the peace with France they cannot be left there to protect the territory, since that can be in no danger. The conclusion drawn from this argument is, that this army is destined to restore the Stadtholder.

There is a rumor current at the Hague of a fact still more decisive. The *present* States General have sent letters of recall to most of the public Ministers of the former government, and among others to Mr. de Reede, the Minister at Berlin. The report is, that when he presented those letters to the King of Prussia his Majesty told him to pay no sort of attention to them, that he should still consider him as the Minister of the United Provinces, that he did not acknowledge the present pretended government of this country, and required him to give them notice of it. Whether this account is accurate or not I have not been able to ascertain, but I have reason to suppose it not without foundation.

The reasoning upon these premises stands thus. The King of Prussia is bound by the treaty to guaranty the ancient Constitution of this country, that is to protect the Stadtholder. The French have expelled the Stadtholder,

and the present government have abolished the office. But France and Prussia have made a peace; that peace necessarily implies either that France shall abandon the Dutch Patriots, or that Prussia shall abandon the Stadtholder. The conduct of both parties furnishes evidence that the former has been done. The French government avoids all engagements with the Patriots, which can entitle them to demand a continuance of assistance. The King of Prussia formally refuses to recognize the present government there, and has sent a powerful army to be ready whenever he shall think proper to enforce his disavowal.

These circumstances have perhaps contributed to maintain and to strengthen the opinion which is very common here and in France, that the governments of that country and of Prussia are agreed upon the restoration of the Stadtholder and of the former government here. But on the other hand a member of the Committee of Public Safety has most explicitly declared that the rumor was utterly destitute of foundation, and that it was invented and propagated by a calumny equally malignant and absurd. It is also said to be as unequivocally for the interest of Prussia, that the Patriots here should be supported, as it is for that of France. The restoration of the Stadtholder would only give these provinces again to Great Britain. This is well known to the Prussian Cabinet by experience. Since the Revolution of 1787 the British government has been much more absolute at the Hague than in London, whereas that of Prussia, so far from possessing the smallest particle of influence, has been repeatedly unable to obtain justice upon several complaints. Prussia might have prevented in all probability the success of the French armies and their arrival at Amsterdam, had she been so disposed, and it is the utmost extravagance to suppose that what neither of the two powers would do,

merely to avoid or prevent the expulsion of the Stadtholder, they should now have agreed to for his restoration.

I am informed from persons to whom the true state of affairs is certainly known, that the alliance with France is expected to be brought to a conclusion within a week or ten days. Should this expectation be realized, the present order of things in this country will doubtless acquire a stability which it has hitherto wanted. If it should continue to be delayed, the rumors and suspicions I have mentioned will acquire some small degree of probability. It is at least *certain*, as I have already had the honor of writing you more than once, that the present administration will accept the treaty upon any conditions be they what they may, and therefore if the Treaty is not soon finished, it will be because the French government are determined not to conclude.

The national sentiment in this country is universally subordinate to the spirit of party. On my arrival here I was somewhat surprised to see an invaded country, in which one half the nation was panting for the success of the invaders, and placing the summit of their happiness in being conquered. The actors have since changed, but the scene is the same; and I still see one half the nation whose only hope consists in the prospect of being conquered again. The hatred of the opposite faction is stronger than the love of country, and this political passion is so universal, that the only individuals I have met with who could be named as exceptions are equally obnoxious to both parties.

The European horizon, which has for a moment had the appearance of clearing up, seems at present to threaten a deeper gloom than ever. Russia is said to be upon the point of a rupture with the Turks and with Sweden, perhaps with Prussia. The Baron de Staël has been received by the National Convention, as ambassador extraordinary from the

King of Sweden with the French Republic. The Russian system is well known, and although it must eventually clash with that of Great Britain, it is supposed that those two powers are like to unite from the coincidence of their present immediate pursuits. Thus the empire of the earth and of the ocean is to be attained in concert, and divided by agreement, and the question which of the parties shall eventually grasp the whole to be left for the decision of futurity.

I have the honor &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, May 4, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Wilcox has not yet been here, but sent me from Hamburg your favor of February 11, which was the first letter I have been happy enough to receive from you since we left America. When he comes here, I shall be happy to show him every civility in my power.

It is extremely pleasing to hear that the elections for the ensuing completion of the Senate have been so favorable. I believe the time is approaching, when even the triple brass of political impudence will melt away before the wisdom of the pacific and neutral system, which struggled with so many interests and so many passions before it could gain a firm establishment.[1] Only one letter from me had been

[1] "All the clouds which appeared to be gathering so thick round our horizon seem to be dispersing, and I hope we shall not again, during the present European convulsions be exposed to the danger of sliding or being drawn into the war. The system of neutrality, which struggled so hard with foreign influence, foreign insolence and injustice, as well as with internal faction and rapacity, before it could obtain a solid and immovable footing, has proved as glorious to the honor, as it has been advantageous to the interests of the United States. There never was a war more ruinous than the present has been to *all* the parties engaged in it.

received by the Secretary of State, when you wrote. I had at that time written nearly thirty, twenty of which might have reasonably been supposed by me to have arrived on the 11th of February. I have sent my letters not only by every vessel that has been known to me from this country, (and I have taken particular pains to be informed of every opportunity,) but from France, from England, from Hamburg and from Bremen. How many of my letters miscarry in the conveyance it is impossible for me to say; but the state of Europe since I came here, and especially the situation of this country, have been such as renders the transmission of letters extremely precarious. For the last four months almost we have been secluded from the regular means of communication with all Europe excepting France, and no dependence to be placed upon the security of that. Nothing can be committed to post offices, where the practice of reading the letters is so openly professed, that nobody thinks of sealing a paper sent through that channel. En-

Sweden and Denmark are the only European powers of any magnitude, that have been able to preserve their nationality, and they are now reaping largely the benefits of so wise a policy.

"It is to the example of the American government that they are indebted for having preserved it, and this fact is incontestible, for I have heard it avowed without hesitation by some of their official characters, certainly well acquainted with the truth." *To Dr. Thomas Welsh*, April 26, 1795. Ms.

"A little wisdom and a little moderation is all we want to secure a continuance of the blessings, of which faction, intrigue, private ambition and desperate fortunes have concurred in exertions to deprive us. The government of the United States need not even appeal to the judgment of posterity, whose benedictions will infallibly follow those measures which were the most opposed. The voice of all Europe already pronounces their justification; the nations which have been grappling together with the purpose of mutual destruction, feeble, exhausted, and almost starving, detest on all sides the frantic war they have been waging; those who have had the wisdom to maintain a neutrality have reason more than ever to applaud their policy, and some of them may thank the United States for the example from which it was pursued." *To Abigail Adams*, May 16, 1795. Ms.

trusting dispatches to the care of individuals is but little more safe. It exposes them often to delays, to carelessness, and even to total failure. With all these inconveniences I have sent since my arrival nearly forty letters to the Department of State alone, and shall continue to write by every opportunity that occurs from hence, and as frequently as may consist with common prudence through France and England.

The information that my first letter was satisfactory, was extremely pleasing to me, because it shows that it was received with an indulgence which all my correspondence will need. I have, indeed, had little apprehension of incurring the censure of writing too little. My principal fear has been lest the charge of an opposite fault should be applicable, that of repeating many times the same observations, and descending too much into the detail of minute circumstances. In spite of the best possible inclination, too, and notwithstanding admonition from you and intimation from Mr. Randolph, I have sometimes given a latitude to opinions upon actors and events, which perhaps will be thought indiscreet. However this may be, I presume the style of my correspondence must be tolerably well known by this time, and if any material variation is desired, it will doubtless be intimated to me.

The political sufferings of Messrs. Van Staphorst had no more effect to the detriment of our credit than their present power has in its favor.[1] It did not, indeed, affect their per-

[1] Of Van Staphorst and Hubbard he wrote to Short, April 18, 1795: "The house remains as usual; but the member of it, who was so lately compelled to leave Amsterdam and seek refuge in voluntary banishment, was at the time when your letter was written a member of the municipal government of the city, and is now in the legislative assembly of the province. Revolutions you know are the order of the day." On Hubbard's attempt to go to England see Adams, *Memoirs*, May 6–8, 1795.

sonal credit or property. Mr. Nicholas van Staphorst, who on my arrival here had privately withdrawn from the pursuit of the then government, is now a member of the States General and employed in some of the most important executive committees. He is one of the most respectable men engaged in the public affairs at present.

If the situation of an American Minister at the Hague was not in its nature and on all common occasions tolerably insignificant, it would have been rendered so by the particular situation of the country since I have been in it. When I first arrived the government was an agonizing patient in the hands of Lord St. Helens. His skill was ineffectual, however, to save; the patient soon expired, but its soul survives and waits in impatient expectation of a glorious resurrection. The very name of *Anglomane* had been long since entirely lost. I assure you, I have not heard the word pronounced since I have been in the country. And indeed as the circumstances were, *that* name would have been ridiculous. As well might the Helots of Lacedaemon have been called *Spartomanes*.

At that time my situation was as unpleasant as it was unmeaning. It was impossible for me not to perceive that I was surrounded with that sort of malevolence, which a West India faithful African may be supposed to bear towards the enemy of his master. It appeared in every shape. It was shown by the whole hierarchy of servitude, from the President of the States General to the hairdresser, from the General Pensionary to the *laquais de louage*. To this general fact the only total exception that I can mention was the Stadtholder himself. I had no business to transact with him, saw him only as a point of form, and not more than three or four times. I had every reason to be satisfied with his reception. From all the rest it was ill-will,

always covered with forms of decency, often aiming at the disguise of politeness, but never successfully concealed.

Since the arrival of the French armies all these appearances have changed. A friendly disposition, a desire to accommodate, a respect and regard for the United States really felt and professed with pleasure, distinguish the present from the past possessors of power. Personally my situation is far more agreeable than it was, but nothing is to be done.[1] The country is conquered; its forms of independence have hitherto been more or less preserved, but they may be laid aside whenever their friends shall think proper, and have already been many times in contradiction with the substance. The government rose upon the basis of French protection; that alone continues its existence and with that it would infallibly vanish. It has become almost universally odious to the people who consider it as in fact more oppressive than that which preceded. The French Convention have not acknowledged it, and may withdraw their protection, which is the breath of its life, whenever they find it for their interest so to do.

The restoration of the Stadtholder sooner or later is inevitable, and with him must come again the subserviency to the mistress of the sea. In every political point of view the Republic will in future be nothing more than a part of

[1] "My situation has indeed been as you suspected, difficult and embarrassing; during the first three months it was unpleasant. But I have not been under any necessity from a dictate of duty to quarrel with any one; and though I have had many temptations, I have as yet found no inducement to discover any partiality towards either of the parties. Each of them has been in its turn, not the pilot, but the rudder of the political ship, and the persons with whom I transacted my first business are all dismissed, expelled, or imprisoned. How long it will be before the course of the Revolution will again reverse the scene of political exaltation and abasement, I shall not pretend to say; but it may be observed with truth that it depends upon the policy of others, and not in the minutest particle upon any agency of their own." *To Charles Adams*, May 17, 1795. Ms.

France or of Britain. I am expecting orders from the Secretary of State for my own regulation, and until I shall receive them I shall not venture to transact any business whatever. . . .

Among the *mille et une* revolutions of France, the union of the Jacobins and the Royalists is one of those at which *our* Jacobins will perhaps be, or affect to be, the most surprised. That they are at present united in the object of their pursuit is unquestionable. That they will succeed is far from being improbable. The alliance of anarchy and despotism is perfectly natural, and the leading members of the Convention are convinced at length that Democracy will answer the purpose of declamation much better than those of government. "Il faut se dépouiller des préjugés de la Revolution," says Thibaudeau, "car si la Revolution a détruit des préjugés, elle en a aussi enfanté." But they have not yet got over their passive obedience to the *opinion publique* of the moment, and of course they still proscribe what they adored, and adore what they proscribed in the interval of a single day. Such a system may properly be styled a democracy, but to call it a government would be making a violent misapplication of words.

I am, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 37 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, May 14, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

On the third instant the National Convention authorized the Committee of Public Safety to send two members on a secret mission, and in consequence of this authority the

citizens Sieyès [1] and Rewbell arrived here on the 8th at the same time. The other Representatives who had been in mission here,[2] but had for some time past absented themselves from the Hague, returned, and the General in Chief of the Army of the North [3] came from Utrecht on the same day. A deputation from the States General of four members has been appointed to confer with the French Representatives and has been very busily engaged with them to the present day.[4] The object of this negotiation is secret, and the conjectures relative to it are various. But as most probably none of the conjectures will be verified by the event, it is scarcely worth while to detail them. The circumstances would seem to indicate that the final agreement upon the relative situation in which France and this Republic are to stand is the principal point. Hitherto all is unsettled. The parties on both sides were very much dissatisfied, and even the forms of independence which alone had been preserved here were violated in so unequivocal a manner and so frequently, as to have become a subject of derision. The present administrators of this government have renewed their hopes since the arrival of the present representatives, and suppose that the treaty which is to proclaim and acknowledge the independence of the Batavian people will be concluded in the course of very few days.

In the meantime everything here is in a state of stagna-

[1] He described Sieyès as appearing "to be between forty and fifty years of age, middling stature, spare person, pale countenance, strong features and bald head; dress simple, but neat, manners cool, approaching to the asperate." *To Abigail Adams*, May 16, 1795. Ms.

[2] Charles-Jean-Marie Alquier (1752–1826), Charles Cochon de Lapparent (1750–1825), Joseph-Charles-Etienne Richard (1761–1834), and Jean-Pierre Ramel (1768–1815). Richard came from Utrecht, and Cochon from Amsterdam.

[3] Jean-René Moreau (1758–1795). [4] The names are given on p. 384, *infra*.

tion. The new government has been arrested in the midst of their own exertions. They have not been permitted to proceed in the new organization of their army and of their fleet, and as the British have at this time the undisputed command of the channel and of the North Sea, the commerce of Holland is almost entirely intercepted.

The law calling for all the gold and silver of individuals has been carried into execution in this province, but as the final period of delivery has not yet come it is not known whether it has been productive of any considerable quantity.

We hear but little at present of the intended National Convention. The design of calling one is not abandoned, but that like everything else depends upon the conclusion of the French alliance, which is yet in expectation.

The probability of a continental peace continues. Spain has not yet concluded, but it is expected she will very soon. A neutrality from the northern part of Germany is secured by the Prussian treaty.

Two additional articles contain the limits agreed upon for the preservation of this neutrality. I have the honor of inclosing a copy of them. The sieges of Luxemburg and Mentz appear to be the only remaining hostilities that designate a state of war. The armies of all the powers at war are everywhere else in profound tranquility. The object of France, it is said, will be to open the campaign by directing the most formidable attack against the Austrian dominions in Italy.

At sea nothing very remarkable has taken place since the action in the Mediterranean.[1] The arrival of several ships from Brest at Toulon has once more given the superiority of force to the French in the Mediterranean. Lord Hood,

[1] The ineffective attack by Vice-admiral Hotham upon the French fleet under Admiral Martin, March 12–14, 1795.

however, has since sailed with a detachment to join the British fleet there,[1] which if effected will again restore them to an equality, or perhaps a small superiority. Several French captains and other officers have arrived here. They are to take the command of the ships belonging to this Republic. This is one of the articles the most painful to the feelings of the new government here, and which it is said is insisted on as a preliminary to the conclusion of the treaty.

I have visited the Representatives newly arrived as has also been done by the other neutral Ministers. The citizen Sieyès in the course of conversation inquired what was the object of the treaty signed by Mr. Jay with the British Ministry.

"It is a treaty of commerce and its object is also the termination of differences which had arisen between the United States and Great Bristain." "Relative to the forts?" "And to several objects of difference. The navigation and commerce of the United States had suffered during the present war. The treaty probably contains arrangements upon the subject." "But why is this treaty still secret?" "It has not yet been ratified, and the local situation of the United States with respect to Europe renders it peculiarly proper that the ratification should precede the publication of the teaty." "Very well for the *time* necessary for the ratification, but after the time which is sufficient has elapsed it is thought extraordinary that a treaty of commerce, and a treaty which may also relate to other objects, should remain secret. Among the public in Paris there are people who make it a subject of speculation and conjecture that the United States are waiting to see what the success of the war will be, and will ratify or reject the terms proposed by the treaty according as the events of that may turn." "You know, citizen, that among the public in Paris

[1] This must have been an error, as Hood was not in favor with the ministry at this time.

as among the public in all places there are people who speculate upon every event, and are very apt to draw conclusions utterly destitute of foundation. The case is such in this instance. The treaty in question did not arrive at Philadelphia until after the session of Congress had come to a constitutional close. I am informed, however, that the President of the United States has called the Senate together for the purpose of submitting the treaty to their deliberations, and it has therefore been merely the result of accident if the only article yet public in Europe is that which stipulates that nothing in the treaty shall be construed, so as to militate with any previous engagement of either party." "And the ratification has been debated by this time?" "Or will be in a very short time."

The conversation is related as accurately as my memory will permit, because one of the other Representatives spoke to me upon the same subject some time since, and these repeated interrogations indicate either a suspicion, or an intention to be supposed suspicious, that some stipulation interesting to France is contained in the treaty. . . .

I have the honor, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 39 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, May 19, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have now the honor of inclosing a paper, containing the substance of the articles forming the treaty signed on the morning of the 17th instant, between the French Representatives Sieyès[1] and Rewbell[2] and the deputies from the States General, Paulus, Lestevenon, Pons[3] and Huber.

[1] Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836).
[2] Jean-François Rewbell (1747–1807).
[3] Matthias Pons.

The event serves to confirm the observation I have made in my preceding letters, that whatever terms might be exacted on the part of France would eventually be consented to in this country.

The terms of this treaty are as advantageous to France and as burdensome to this people as the possibility of execution will admit. But from the habits and feelings of the persons composing the present administration, Maestricht, Venlo, Dutch Flanders and one hundred millions of florins, are no object in comparison with the danger of a Stadtholder. The point respecting the command of the ships of war appears to have been abandoned; the French captains who had arrived at Rotterdam have returned. By the treaty the stipulation only purports that in case of combined operations the commander shall be French. It is somewhat questionable whether the engagement to furnish during this campaign twelve ships of the line and eighteen frigates for the North Sea and the Baltic will be practicable.

It is hardly supposable that this treaty will fail of obtaining an immediate ratification by the French National Convention.[1] The great object of internal policy represented in a statement dated February 27, to which I beg leave to refer, may be considered as effected. The internal object, the calling of a National Convention to form a constitution of government for the Batavian people, may now be pursued. It is to be presumed that it will meet with the earliest attention, but whether the plan of completing this business immediately will prevail, or that of postponing these political arrangements until a time of peace and tranquility will be preferred, is yet to be ascertained. The Treaty makes this country a party to the war with France against the combined powers. The country is exhausted, and yet the

[1] It was ratified May 27.

most extraordinary exertions are required of it. Perhaps it will be concluded that the exigencies of the times demand action more than deliberation, and the formation of a constitution will be deferred till a calmer and less critical time.

The pecuniary payment stipulated by one of the articles cannot be made in the present exhausted state of the national finances without the adoption of some extraordinary measures. There are some appearances which might induce an expectation that considerable resources are contemplated in the article of confiscation. Hitherto the treatment experienced by the agents and partizans of the House of Orange and of the former government has been remarkably moderate. The policy of burying in oblivion the differences which heretofore divided the people has been professed by the possessors of the new government, and forcibly recommended and inculcated by the French representatives and generals. A different system it is now said will probably be pursued. Several persons have within these two days been arrested, and pamphlets highly labored and well written are published, in order to give a new direction to the public opinion.

It has already been mentioned that the municipal government of Amsterdam has long since ceased to harmonize with the general government of the province. The division continues, and increases from day to day. The municipality of Amsterdam have, therefore, determined to restore their functions to the people from whom they are supposed to have received them, and a new election is proposed speedily to take place.

The Orange partizans have not yet abandoned their hopes; they cannot yet persuade themselves that the King of Prussia will leave his sister and his daughter to their fate. The grounds upon which their expectations

are founded have been mentioned heretofore, and although the conclusion of this new treaty destroys almost entirely the scaffolding of their system, the presence of the Prussian army in Westphalia still flatters them with the hopes of being once more conquered.

The Russian chargé des affaires has received orders from his court to quit this place without taking leave, and is gone accordingly. It can scarcely be a doubt but that the events of the last campaign, the unparalleled success of the French armies, together with the change in the principles professed by their government and the misfortunes of Poland, have produced a great revolution in the policy of almost all the European Cabinets. The objects which were the original causes of the war have disappeared in the vortex of events that have occurred. The division of France, or the establishment of a government in that country by external compulsion, is recognized as a vain imagination. The dread of political doctrines is equally removed, and the fears and jealousies which heretofore divided the several sovereigns of Europe have returned in all their force, to sow the seeds of future wars.

A distinguished member of the National Convention declared about two months since, in a labored speech relative to the negotiations for peace, that the real enemies of the Republic were *Britain*, *Austria* and *Russia*, and he endeavored to prove that from those powers so much was to be apprehended by all the other in Europe, that France must naturally be the friend and ally of all the rest. The partition of Poland appears evidently to have occasioned a very serious difference between the allies, who made the conquest in conjunction. It has given an alarm to the Turks, to Sweden and Denmark, who find themselves henceforth exposed as the most immediate objects of

Russian ambition. A variety of circumstances have concurred to prove that Great Britain and Russia harmonize in their present pursuits, and it is even affirmed that a new alliance has been formed between them, in consequence of which a Russian fleet is expected to be stationed in the Baltic during the present campaign. It is further supposed that a rupture will very soon take place between Russia and the King of Prussia. The reciprocal advantage to be afforded by Great Britain is the abandonment of Poland, and even the support of the Russian system there. Among the circumstances which corroborate these opinions are the recall of the British Minister who has heretofore resided in Poland, and the present recall of the Russian chargé des affaires from this place.

To counterbalance this association of Britain, Russia and Austria, it is supposed that the purpose of the French government will be to unite against it together with their own efforts the force of Prussia, Sweden and the Turkish Empire against the continental powers, and that of Holland, and perhaps of Spain against Britain.

It will be undoubtedly from the intelligence you will receive directly from Paris, and from the officers of the French government in America, that the best conclusion may be drawn, whether the intention of exciting new enemies against Great Britain extends to the United States. In the conversations I had with the Representatives, soon after their first arrival here, they all assured me of their entire satisfaction in the *neutrality* of the United States. One of them (Richard) expressly said that the French government had been fully content with the assurance they had received from Mr. Monroe, that the treaty signed by Mr. Jay in November contained nothing inconsistent with the engagements of the United States with France. It is not to be

dissimulated that the language held by the citizen Sieyès in the interview I had with him here, and of which an account has already been given, is of a different complexion. At the present moment the treaty itself may be more a cause of objection than its contents.

There is one circumstance from which the most substantial hope of a general pacification proceeds, and it is almost the only one, but indicates the probability of war more extensive than it has been hitherto. The scarcity of provisions is severely felt by all the nations of Europe, and unless the means of cultivation, which have been very much reduced, and the commerce which has been nearly annihilated, should be restored by the return of peace, a general famine will be inevitable in the course of the following winter, or at latest by the ensuing spring. This prospect appears already so evidently to all the parties that it may possibly contribute to the success of negotiations which will, perhaps, not be interrupted by the hostilities of the present campaign. Some considerable change may perhaps be expected in the internal state of France, but what it will be is very uncertain, and it is impossible to calculate whether it will produce any alteration whatever in their external policy.

With every sentiment of respect, &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, May 22, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

My last letter acknowledged the receipt of your favor of February 11. That of December 2 has since reached me. By the same opportunity I have letters from my brother Charles of March 12. And I have seen Boston papers to the 1st of April. Our information from America is yet

generally indirect and our means of conveyance few, difficult and uncertain.

The appointment which places me here is undoubtedly respectable, much beyond the line of my pretensions, and the advantage of seeing Europe at the present moment is personally a subject of particular gratification to me. The situation which I was obliged to abandon for this gave me nothing, or very little in *possessions*, but a fair and rational prospect, infinitely more pleasing than those now before me. My sacrifice was merely of an expectancy, but a very valuable one in every point of view. It was independence, usefulness and personal consideration; but above all the increasing attachment of friends, which every probability led me to expect would be durable. The benefit of your advice and instructions, the society however interrupted and partial of my mother and the rest of the family, though I feel severely the loss of them, were yet so inevitable and of impossible consistency with an absence beyond the Atlantic, that I do not reckon them in the account.

As it respects my country that has certainly gained nothing by the exchange. To speak the sentiments of my heart without equivocation, an American Minister at the Hague is one of the most useless beings in creation. The whole corps diplomatique here, according to a late French production of considerable merit, *n'est plus qu'une Assemblée de nouvellistes*, and the actor must have not an humble but a degraded idea of himself, who can be satisfied with the part of receiving the pay of a nation for the purpose of *penetrating* the contents of a newspaper.

As a single private individual I flatter myself that my mite of contribution to the public service in America was more valuable than any that I can render at present. The retribution is equally inconsistent with propriety. At pres-

ent I am liberally paid for no service at all. There my only reward for considerable labor, and some political courage, was abuse, sometimes upon myself which was of very little consequence to me, but much more frequently upon an object entitled to all the veneration of the whole people, as much as he was possessed of mine, and who was persecuted for my offences with a malignancy and a brutality such as among mankind is experienced only by virtue and integrity; but which real crimes and infamy are too much respected ever to suffer.

At length, after four months of suspense upon the fate of this country, a treaty to acknowledge the independence and sovereignty of the Batavian people without a Stadtholder was signed on the 17th instant, by two members of the French Committee of Public Safety (Rewbell and Sieyès), and four deputies from the States General.

This treaty will undoubtedly be published in the American newspapers before my letter can reach you, and I hope it will be a subject of serious reflection to every American. It shows in the clearest light at what price the friendship and assistance of France as a Republic is estimated by her own government. Let it be remembered that from the commencement of the war they have declared themselves the enemies of the Stadtholder and his government, but the *friends* and *allies* of the Dutch people. These friends and allies, after considering this territory during four months as a conquest, and treating it accordingly, though with all possible civility and some generosity, finally exact as conditions for acknowledging the liberty and independence of their friends and allies, a very considerable dismemberment of territory, a perpetual pledge of political subserviency, and one hundred million of florins in cash. *Non tali auxilio.*

These facts are the more deserving of consideration,

because I have several reasons to suppose that the policy of the French government at present is to make *use* of the United States, as they are now making use of these Provinces, that is, as an instrument for the benefit of France, as a passive weapon in her hands against her most formidable enemy. Being at a distance from Paris and having no regular connection with any members of that government, I am unable to trace the causes of my suspicions to a very certain source. I have not the means of ascertaining any considerable variety of facts, from the combination of which a conclusion to warrant any affirmative declaration could be drawn, and the communication with France itself is so liable to accident, that I am unable to correspond with Mr. Monroe so confidentially as would be necessary to determine how far my conjectures are founded.

From the occurrences of the last year, it is certain that a prodigious alteration in the relative position of the European powers towards one another has taken place. The centre of combination has been equally removed by the victories of France and by the misfortunes of Poland. The drunken madness of political fanaticism has subsided surprisingly. The ruin of France remains therefore the only centre of union to the coalesced powers, but this principle is no less repulsive on one side than it is attractive on the other. New interests have arisen to form different combinations from those of the war as it began, and they have already been productive of a considerable revolution of policy, discovered in many public events and distinguishable from other circumstances.

The tendency of these new interests is to unite the efforts of Austria, Russia and Britain, for the present moment, in one common pursuit; but it unites equally all the rest of Europe against them.

This combination is unquestionably formidable, and it has an immense advantage in the pecuniary resources of Great Britain. They remain at least for present occasion in undiminished vigor, while those of France are exhausted in proportion to the violence of those exertions that have acquired her splendid triumphs.

It is not to be doubted but that France intends to unite against her three remaining rivals and enemies as many European powers as possible. The policy has been indeed clearly discovered in speeches made to the National Convention by members of the Executive Committee, in which mention has escaped of nations "which had observed neutrality, wise in its principle, but which has become insufficient," where subsidies to be given for the purpose of causing a diversion have been suggested, and where numerous objections have been made to prove that Spain, Prussia and Holland are all deeply interested in the future success of the French cause.

The intention of employing the United States likewise as an useful enemy to Great Britain has not been so openly avowed. And long since the arrival of the French armies in this country, the Representatives with whom I have had occasion to converse have declared themselves to be entirely satisfied with the neutrality of the United States. They do not at present say expressly the contrary, but they observe, that it is very extraordinary that the treaty signed by Mr. Jay last November should yet be kept secret.

It is impossible that they should imagine there is anything in that treaty with which France can have any pretence to interfere. It is therefore the treaty itself, which does not suit these views, because they consider it as the means of terminating differences, which their own interest leads them to wish may terminate in a rupture.

If these conjectures have as much foundation as I apprehend, the whole French influence in America will exert itself with more than usual activity to prevent the ratification of the treaty, and to produce at all events a war between the United States and Great Britain, not assuredly from regard to our interest, which they respect as much as they do that of their friends and allies the Hollanders, but because they are sensible of how much importance our commerce is to Great Britain, and suppose that the loss of it would make that nation outrageous for peace, and compel the Minister to make it upon the terms they are disposed to dictate.

It was probably the intention of the Brissotine party, the Executive Council, who sent Genet to America to involve the United States in a war with Britain, but in such a manner as should be imperceptible to ourselves, as should have the appearance of being entirely a war of our own, and should leave France free from all engagements, in full liberty to make her own peace, whenever she might think proper, and leave us to extricate ourselves as we could. This plan was not successful in its execution, and perhaps was abandoned by the Executive Committee, which rose upon the ruins of the Council. To them the neutrality of the United States was at least as beneficial as any assistance they could expect from them in a state of war, or at least by appearing to pursue a different policy, they meant to make it an instrument of odium against the party they had then defeated. That Committee has been sacrificed in its turn. Everything done by them is an object of execration. They are Jacobins, Terrorists, Royalists, drinkers of blood, robbers, scourges of the human race, everything that a victorious party can make of one that is defeated. The truth of the fact seems to be that the Brissotine party have resumed

their superiority in the Convention, and have derived among the people some consideration, more from the detestation of their predecessors, than from their own merits. They have resumed the principles and the policy, which the decemviral government had abandoned, and among the rest perhaps the design of fomenting a war between America and Great Britain. They have sent to America a new minister,[1] to take the place of Fauchet; a man, who has been heretofore employed by them in their revolutionary manœuvres at Geneva, and who, as one of the Representatives lately a member of the Committee of Public Safety told me, was substituted instead of the other, whose "talents and experience are found to be not equal to the importance of the mission."

I have considered it as an indispensable duty that I owe to my country to express to you, Sir, my ideas and suspicions upon a subject of so much importance: in my public correspondence I have scarcely hinted at them, because they are but suspicions, and because there is another source, from which more accurate information is to be expected, and will doubtless be received. At least if my conjectures are groundless they will be harmless, because the state of affairs in America will prove them to be fallacious. If they are well founded, it may not be useless that the symptoms breaking forth in this quarter of the world should be known to you, and combined with those that will discover themselves in America.

If their present views really are to draw the United States into a war with Britain, their only motive for it must be to accelerate their own peace. The general sentiment of the French at the present moment, if I mistake not, is less cordial towards the Americans than it has been. They envy

[1] Pierre August Adet (1763–1832). See *Correspondence of French Ministers* (Turner), 728.

us the immense advantage we have derived from our neutrality; they think we have grown rich upon their impoverishment; that we have drained them of their specie, and they do not scruple to charge our merchants who have supplied their most urgent necessities, with having taken advantage of their wants to extort extravagant profits upon their commerce. Peace has become an object of extreme necessity to them; their finances, their commerce, their manufactures, their agriculture, their population, all by an inseparable chain are connected in a dependence upon the return of peace. Yet the brilliancy of their victories, and especially the security of the prevailing party, make it indispensably necessary to them to insist upon conditions, to which their enemies in the present state of affairs will certainly not submit. It is for their benefit alone, therefore, that they wish to see us engaged, and should they succeed in this intention the principal, perhaps the only use they will make of their success will be to obtain more glorious terms of peace for themselves.

The President of the United States has so decidedly adopted and maintained the policy of neutrality, and it has proved so advantageous to the country, that it is perhaps an idle apprehension that can imagine it will again be endangered. Before this letter reaches you, the question upon the ratification of the treaty signed in November will undoubtedly be decided. The die will be cast; the point of peace or enmity with Britain settled. If by a ratification of the treaty, perhaps a coolness on the part of France will again be discernible, but from which no ill consequences whatever are to be dreaded. If the treaty should be rejected, the French influence and French intrigue, always so active and powerful among us, will become much more busy than they have ever been before.

On the first supposition their disappointment will have no serious consequence, because they have still great need of our supplies, because the policy of their government under every possible variation will always be to conform the style of their pretentions in their political relations with us to the degree of firmness or of acquiescence discovered on our part, and because our friendship and neutrality must be more agreeable and advantageous to them than a state of variance. Failing in their favorite object, they will eventually content themselves with that which they consider as the next best, and very possibly the situation of their internal concerns may once more make it the interest of a prevailing faction to alter the system of external policy, in order by the restoration of cordiality with their neighbors, to cast an odium upon their rivals at home.

If the treaty should not be ratified, the French will exert themselves for the purpose of hurrying us into a war, which may hasten their means of making peace, and in which they may be under no obligation of making a common cause with us. Their partizans, perhaps, in declamations or in newspapers will promise wonders from their co-operation; their official characters possibly may employ a great number of what they call *phrases*, but will have no power to contract any substantial engagements; we shall be friends, brothers, allies, fellow-freemen, loaded with all the tenderness of family affections introduced by a political prosopopeia into national concerns, and the final result of the whole matter will be, that all this tender sympathy, this amiable fraternity, this lovely coalescence of liberty, will leave us the advantage of being sacrificed to their interests, or of purchasing their protection upon the most humiliating and burdensome conditions, and at the same time of being reduced to the condition of glorying in our disgrace, and

hailing the instrument of our calamity as the weapon of our deliverance.

I wish that the situation of affairs in America may be such as shall afford a full demonstration, that these are ideas merely visionary, and above all I wish that we may never have occasion for any political connections in Europe. The alarming prospects of famine, which threaten every part of this hemisphere, may perhaps contribute more than any other circumstance to a general pacification, which if it should be effected will in truth be nothing more than a suspension of arms.

The internal state of France is critical, and will probably experience a considerable change in the course of the present year. It is impossible, however, to anticipate at this distance what turn it will take. They are weary of their revolutionary government, and universally convinced that the Constitution which has been accepted can never be carried into execution in its present state. As they do not yet venture to lay it entirely aside, they have contrived to propose a supplementary addition under the name of *organic laws*.[1] A committee of eleven [2] members has been chosen by the Convention to prepare them and the result of their labors will soon be presented to the Assembly. The weakness of their present government is the principal subject of complaint at this time, and the principles of moderation are found incompetent to repress the movements of popular indignation and revenge. The execution of sixteen persons formerly composing part of the revolutionary tribunal under the government of Robespierre, has recently taken place at Paris with the sanction of legal forms, but at Lyons the impatience of the people has anticipated the decision of justice, and on the 4th of this month the sanc-

[1] That is, a new constitution. [2] Appointed April 23.

tuary of the prisons was again violated, and sixty or seventy persons were sacrificed by the people, as an atonement for the cruelties of which they had been heretofore the principal agents.

I am, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 43 [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, June 24, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Previous to the revolution which happened in this country in the year 1787, in most of the cities and villages throughout the provinces certain clubs or popular societies had formed themselves, similar in their nature to those which have since then been so notorious in France, and to those which upon their model have recently arisen in the United States. After the victory of the Stadtholder over the patriotic party these societies were prohibited from assembling, and others, consisting only of the partizans of the House of Orange, were substituted in their stead. Since the arrival of the French armies in Holland and the revolution consequent upon that event, the Orange societies have been prohibited in their turn, and the patriotic clubs have been revived.

The only qualification requisite to make any person eligible as a member of these clubs is that of being an unequivocal partizan. They are composed, therefore, of people in every different situation of society, and are very considerable in point of numbers. It has been indeed considered as a sort of test to judge of the patriotism of every individual, and numbers of people become members of the clubs as they wear the cockade of the day, merely for the purpose of securing a guard against odium, and a protection from insult.

Since the last revolution the persons vested with the powers of administration have observed uniformly towards the members of the ancient government, a system of moderation and of conciliation equally dictated by humanity and by policy. The same principle has been supported and promoted by the officers of the French government, civil and military, and has hitherto been attended with very good consequences. The principal opposition to this system has arisen from the popular societies, who in several of the large cities have passed resolves of a different complexion, and in some have peremptorily demanded of the present magistrates to adopt measures of remedy against the members of the former regencies.

These ebullitions were in general contained within bounds until the conclusion of the alliance with France, partly by the exhortations of the present magistrates, and principally by the superintendence of the French Representatives and generals who, more than once, declared in the most positive terms that they would not suffer the execution of any arbitrary designs, and would protect all the members of the former government or others, against every attempt to persecute them without a specific accusation.

The popular societies submitted, but did not acquiesce. On the 14th of this month, at Rotterdam, in consequence of a resolution taken at the society, a notification was dispersed throughout the city, inviting all true patriots to assemble together in a public place assigned at a certain hour of that day.

The meeting was numerous to the amount of several thousands. They deliberated, they resolved and finally determined to go in a body to the house where the municipality was assembled, and send a deputation to them, demanding in the name of the people that *all* the members of the

former Regency be put under arrest in their houses. That the former *High Officer* be confined in close prison, that all the subaltern officers of the Orange party still in employment be immediately dismissed and others appointed on their stead, true Patriots and such as should be agreeable to the people.

The Council of the municipality refused at first to comply with these demands, assigning as their reasons for this refusal that the citizens had not been legally assembled, and their deputation could not therefore be considered as expressing the voice of the people; and further that, as the deputation alleged no cause whatever for the arrest of the former Regents and High Officer, the demand could not be complied with but by a violation of the rights of men and citizens, rights which they, the members of the municipality, had promised before God and their fellow citizens to support, and one article of which was that "no man can rightfully be accused, arrested and imprisoned but in such cases and according to such formalities, as have previously been established by law." This answer was not satisfactory to the people who surrounded the State House, and the municipality were soon after compelled by the fear for their own lives to declare, that they were obliged to choose *between the circumstances and the law*, and therefore adopted all the measures that had been thus dictated to them.

The next day all the members of the municipality resigned their places, but have since consented to continue their functions until the Provincial Assembly shall have come to some determination relative to this transaction. The same collection of people afterwards appointed a committee, and sent them to the Provincial Assembly demanding: 1. That one or more revolutionary tribunals be created for the purpose of revising the judicial decisions under the former

government relative to political offences, and to indemnify the innocent for their injuries out of the property of the Regents at that time. 2. That all the former Regents of the Orange party be put under arrest; and 3. The dismission of all the partizans of the House of Orange from every species of public employment.

On the 16 the Provincial Assembly appointed a committee to go to Rotterdam, and hold an amicable conference with the committee from the multitude that had assembled, and to endeavor to settle the affair in a satisfactory manner. The result of this conference was an arrangement, in consequence of which the members of the former Regency were dismissed from their arrest, giving the security of bonds to a large amount, and the people of the city were authorized to appoint a committee of vigilance to preserve the public peace and tranquility. Here the matter rests for the present.

Something of a similar nature has occurred, it is said, in some other cities, and it is not improbable but the same spirit will discover itself with equal force at Amsterdam.

The generality of the party at present victorious have never been satisfied with the moderation that has been shown to the Regents and officers of the former government. Patriotism has considered them as offenders deserving punishment, private malice and resentment have viewed them as oppressors reduced to impotence, and therefore proper subjects of apprehension in their turn. Interest has looked only at their wealth, and supposed that it offered a just and plentiful supply to the present necessities of the country. These dispositions have been very much strengthened and increased by the conduct and conversation of the other party. The lenity they have experienced, instead of reconciling

them to the new order of things, has only given them courage to hope to rail and to threaten. It is hardly conceivable with what imprudence they provoke severity, and bid defiance to a power certainly competent to ruin them. At the same time they are constantly feeding their own hopes with rumors, the credit of which rests upon no other foundation than their absurdity. A new revolution is so constantly the object of their wishes, that they grasp at everything true or false which can flatter their expectations. The impatience of their desires overleaps the bounds of space and time. They bring an English fleet upon the coast, or introduce a Prussian army into the heart of the country, with a facility more than practical, and, without waiting for an uncertain reality, they hasten to enjoy the triumph prepared for them with such rapidity that they have repeatedly stimulated their partisans among the populace to acts of riot and sedition, which it has been found necessary to punish.

Such is the present state of the temper between the two great parties of this Republic. It is thought that it may be not altogether useless to have entered into some detail on the subject, because it may serve to give an idea of the public mind as it exists here at this time, and because it may indicate the probability of a material change in the system of internal policy in this Republic. The treatment of the members of the former government forms a part of an external system, and should the principles which have hitherto been pursued in this particular be abandoned, those which must be substituted in their stead would unquestionably have a very essential operation upon the aspect of affairs throughout their provinces.

Please to accept the assurances, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 44. [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, June 25, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

. . . I have now the honor of inclosing the translation of the plan for the convocation of a National Convention, which has been sent by the States General to the several Provincial Assemblies for their consideration. The probability seems to be that it will eventually be adopted, but the deliberations will be more or less deferred in the different provinces, and a considerable time will elapse before it will be put in execution.

The principal objection that I have heard against it is, that it interposes another provisional government between the present and that of a regular constitution, that it multiplies revolutions beyond the line of necessity, and seems to prescribe changes merely for the sake of changing.

This is not however generally considered an objection of much weight, nor is the plan itself a subject of much discussion. It is indeed impossible to conceive a people more indifferent to everything relating to theories of government than the Batavians. I should hazard nothing in saying that the law calling for the gold and silver of the citizens has been the subject of more animadversions in every town of the Republic, than the plan herewith inclosed has been, or ever will be, throughout the whole territory. The plan itself may perhaps give an adequate idea of the people for whom it is formed. It is the result of three months' labor and intelligence of a committee appointed for the purpose, and it is distinguishable less perhaps for any luminous principles than for a minuteness of detail, which does

not disdain even the building of benches for the voters in the primary assemblies. . . .

June 26. The affair of the municipality of Rotterdam has not hitherto had consequences so unpleasant as was apprehended, the demonstration of mutual opposition has, indeed, more than once assumed an alarming appearance, but hitherto has produced no distressing events. The Provincial assembly annulled the order that had been extorted from the municipality, and discharged from their arrest the magistrates of the former Regency, excepting only the high officer Van Staveren, whose arrest is continued, and the irritation of the people of Rotterdam against him is given as the reason for the measure. They made at the same time a calm, rational and judicious address to the people who had made the irregular demands, recommending temper and moderation to them, and conjuring them not to disgrace the fair and unblemished character of the revolution by acts of violence, even against the most obnoxious characters. They proposed, however, to appoint a Committee to examine into the conduct as well relative to concerns of politics as of finance of all the former regents, in order that those who had been the oppressors of the people should be compelled to make indemnity from their private fortunes. These measures, however, were far from being satisfactory to the popular society at Rotterdam. The secretary of the irregular assembly formally protested against the decree of the Provincial Assembly, and published his protest in the newspaper. On the 22d instant the people assembled again in considerable numbers. But the French commandant of the place, in concert with the municipality, having publicly declared that he should use all the force under his command against any attempt whatever to disturb the peace, and every demonstration of a determination to defend the munici-

pality at all hazards against any further indignity being made, they finally dispersed without attempting any violence.

June 30. I have this day received from the Greffier of the States General a card which mentions that the secretary of the Ambassador Extraordinary from the Republic at Paris has just arrived, with the ratification by the National Convention of the treaty of friendship and alliance, signed at the Hague on the 15 of May last, and inclosing two copies of the treaty. I send one of them herewith.

On the twenty-third of this month the commission of eleven appointed by the Convention to prepare and present for discussion the organic laws of the proposed French constitution, made their report to the assembly. They have abandoned without ceremony the constitution of 1793, and substituted in its stead much more similar to those forms of government which are familiar to Americans. The assembly are to open the discussion of the plan on the 4th of July.

The legislative body is proposed to consist of two parts, a council of 500 and a council of *Elders* to the number of 250, to be renewed by halves every two years. A landed property of some kind is made a qualification of eligibility. The Council of 250 has only a negative upon the laws proposed by the more numerous body.

The executive power is to consist of a *directory* of five members, one of whom is to be renewed annually, and which is to be presided by the members alternately each for three months at a time. The legislative and executive powers are both to be surrounded with forms of solemnity, and to be guarded by an armed force. These are the principal circumstances which discover the prevalence of theoretic opinions which have been unfavorably reviewed at certain periods of the Revolution. The report was made by Boissy d'Anglas,

a member who has been very much distinguished of late, and whose intrepidity on a recent critical occasion has given him an extraordinary degree of popularity.[1] It was received with great applause by the audience in the galleries, and appears to be equally satisfactory to the public in Paris.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, June 27, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received two or three days since your favors of March 26, April 21 and 26, all together, and I know not how to express the pleasure they gave me. The first and dearest of all my wishes is personally to give satisfaction, and obtain the approbation of my parents, and in a public capacity to justify the confidence placed in me by the appointment I now hold. This wish is in both parts so abundantly gratified by the warm and cordial expressions used in your letters, that I have nothing left to desire but a continuance of that kindness and indulgence which I have always experienced from you, and which the government has been pleased to bestow upon my first performances in their service.

Every suggestion or intimation of advice from you will always be received with gratitude by me, because I know from long experience, that it will operate to my own advantage in its use. The officer[2] I mentioned to you in one of my first letters, and with respect to whom you give me a caution, never had any confidence from me. His adventure here, and his claims and those of his friends for my

[1] In the affair of 1 Prairial (May 1), when the head of the murdered Jean Féraud on a pike was waved before him as he presided over the Convention.

[2] Eustace.

official services, embarrassed me not a little upon my first arrival. But as I was from the first moment guarded by my suspicions, I refused all interference in his affair beyond what I considered as an obligation of duty. By doing more I should have paid my court more effectually to the *Patriots*, who are now at the head of affairs, but I had not forgotten that I was not sent here to make myself a partizan of Dutch factions, and I had upon that occasion at least the advantage of discovering, what has since received ample confirmation, that I must be content with coolness from the patriotic party as well as from the other, and must reconcile myself philosophically to the certainty of being no favorite with either side.

I have endeavored in my letters to you hitherto to preserve a chain of general intelligence relative to the most important political affairs of Europe. Since my last letter, or rather while I was writing it, a furious insurrection broke out against the Convention, which was during two days upon the point of a general massacre, and one member of which was killed by a pistol shot, and his head was carried on a pike in the Hall of the Convention itself. The revolt however was eventually suppressed, and as soon as the victory of the Assembly was ascertained, they appointed a *military commission* of five members to try all offenders concerned in that conspiracy. By this tribunal six members of the Convention have recently been condemned to death.[1] All six attempted to anticipate the execution by their own hands, three of them succeeded, but the rest suffered according to the judgement. Three other members of the Convention prevented even their trial by a voluntary death. Several others are still reserved for trial, and in all probability will have the same fate. All this proceeds from a deadly aver-

[1] Romme, Duquesnoy, Duroy, Bourbotte, Soubrany, and Goujeon.

sion to the sanguinary system of terror pursued in the time of Robespierre. But this singular species of humanity, this energetic abhorrence of cruelty, is not confined within the limits of legal forms. In many of the departments the former murderers are murdered with as little ceremony, the drowners are drowned. The mere name of Terrorist is a title to proscription, and how often the *name* is given by private malice for the sake of producing the proscription, is not told. These excesses are disapproved by all the sober part of the nation, they are disapproved even by the Convention, but they are committed every day, and there is no power competent to restrain or to punish them. On the other hand the war in the Vendée again blazes out with extreme violence, as is said. A sort of treaty had been signed by the deputies of the Convention on the one side and the principal leaders of the rebellion on the other. The latter were promised pardon and protection, engaging to submit to the laws of the Republic. It is now said they were perfidiously dissimulating; that they have violated the pacifications. Twenty-five or thirty of them have been arrested and sent to Paris for trial, and the Convention has decreed that the violation of the treaty is an offence punishable with death.

At Toulon a Jacobin insurrection was for some time successful. It extended to the fleet then in the harbor, and prevented it from sailing to meet the British fleet in the Mediterranean. A member of the Convention in mission there was driven to despair by this event, and shot himself. But this revolt was of short duration; order was soon restored, and the fleet has now sailed.

The son of Louis the 16th died in the temple on the 8th [10] of this month.[1] His sister, the only remaining child

[1] Louis XVII. *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII, 389.

of the late King, it is said, is very ill. The surgeon who attended the boy in his illness died a few days before him. A procés verbal, signed by four health officers, by order of the Committee of General Surety, declares that the death was owing to a scrofulous disease of long continuance.

In the midst of all these events the arms of the Republic continue to be victorious. Luxemburg not long since capitulated, and a garrison of twelve thousand men returns to Germany engaging not to serve against the French or their allies during the war. Mentz alone now remains to be taken on the left side of the Rhine. A peace between France and the German Empire becomes probable. But the Emperor and Great Britain, or at least the latter, will remain at war.

The perseverance of the British government is founded upon their confidence in their naval superiority, which is now established more decisively than it has ever been. The French government, to make a parade of commanding the seas, sent their large fleet of thirty-six men of war to cruise to and fro in the channel, through the months of December and January last. They enjoyed the satisfaction of naval empire at their full leisure. It was not for a moment disputed, and indeed scarcely perceived in a season when commerce is not fond of frequenting the channel. The price at which this enjoyment was purchased was the total loss of seven ships of the line wrecked in a tempest, and all the fleet so shattered and disabled, that it has not yet been repaired, and will be able to do nothing this season. It is possible that one effort more will be made in the Mediterranean, but the reasonable Frenchmen begin to give up even the pretension of contesting the sea during the present war. They did expect that their success in this country could have

proved essentially advantageous to them, and upon their first arrival here you would have imagined they were landing upon the English coast. They soon discovered their error. The naval force of this country was *magni nominis umbra*, and if the French did not take possession of all they found in the ports of this Republic by right of *conquest*, it was merely because all they found was really not worth taking. The Batavians have stipulated in their treaty of alliance to have twelve ships of the line and eighteen frigates during this season ready for sea. They will probably not have half the number. At this moment there does not appear to be a single frigate or man of war fit for sea, and the British come and take prizes in full sight of the Texel itself.

On the strength of their maritime supremacy the British government have revived their system of famishing their enemies into submission, and as they were unable to protect the Hollanders as friends, they have concluded to starve them too. All neutral vessels laden with provisions bound to France or Holland are to be captured by the British armed vessels and carried into their ports, the freights and cargoes to be paid.

The policy of the British government seems to consider military operations as the least essential part of war. The pride, pomp and circumstance of their hostility consist not in the neighing steed, the shrill trump, the spirit stirring drum, the ear piercing fife, or the royal banner, but in forgery and famine. Their troops have been the terror of their friends and the derision of their enemies, but their artists are inimitable at counterfeiting an assignat, and their frigates and privateers are invincible against the merchant vessels of neutral nations. *Trahit sua quamque voluptas:* every man has his predilection for some particular

The character, the situation and temper of the Provincial Assembly of the municipalities in general, of the popular societies, and of the *peuple patriote*, are all displayed more clearly in this one transaction than could be done by a volume of description or argumentation. In the rulers you see moderation, a regard for good principles, and a sense of the duties annexed to their stations, but all subordinate to complaisance for the popular will, and still more to personal fear. In the popular societies and their emanations, the thirst for party vengeance, the want of confidence in the nominal rulers so lately the objects of their own choice, the contempt of all principles upon which political and civil liberty must be founded, and the defiance publicly proclaimed of all the authorities which have so recently been created, are equally discernible. I have related this anecdote therefore as a specimen from which it may be judged what the present state of affairs here is. Many others might be told, bearing in a degree the same distinctive marks, and all would tend to the confirmation of the same conclusion. In the meantime the project of making a new Constitution is yet held forth, and the States General have lately sent to the Provincial Assemblies for their acceptance a plan for the convocation of a National Convention. This plan is considered as a thing of so little consequence, that it has not even been published in any of the French newspapers of the country. I have therefore made a translation of it from the Dutch for the Secretary of State, and send a copy of it also to you, because it is really an object of curiosity, and because I am glad to have an opportunity of showing you that I have not entirely neglected the language.

I shall perhaps take another opportunity to communicate the observations which this plan suggests in relation to the state of public opinion upon the theory of government, but at

present I must remember I am writing a letter and not a volume.

I have at length received instructions, which relieve me from all embarrassment with respect to the conduct I have to hold in the changes which have been, and yet will be, taking place around me.[1] Hitherto I have had no occasion to

[1] "The maxim of the President towards France has been to follow the *government* of the *people*. Whatsoever *regimen* a *majority* of *them* shall establish is, *both de facto* and *de jure*, that to which our minister there *addresses himself*. If therefore the *independency* of the *United Netherlands* continues, it is wished that you make no difficulty in passing from the *old* to any *new constitution* of the *people*. If the new *rulers* will *accept* your *old powers* and *credentials*, offer them. If they *require others* adapted to the *new order* of *things*, assure the *proper authorities* or *individuals* that you will *write* for them, and doubt not that they will be expedited.

"Should the United *Netherlands* become a *dependence* on the *French Republic*, your mission will of course be terminated by the *extinction* of the *nation* itself. But in this *event* you will continue on the *ground* until further *instructions*, taking care to *communicate* fully, and by quadruplicates, with this *government*. At the same time you will be as *neutral* as possible in your *conduct* and *remarks* and avoid *offence* to *either side*. Should anything be said to *you on the French side* urging *some declaration* from *you*, it will be *enough* to give *assurances* of *our regard* for the *French Republic*, and to express your *confidence* that as in your *instructions* the *event* could not have been *foreseen*, every accommodation will *be made* by your *government* for *maintaining* an *harmonious intercourse* with that *Republic* and its *connections*.

"Should it be *doubtful* in whose hands [*government*] will be finally *established*, your *prudence* must prevent *you from committing* the *government* of the *United States* until *you see* your *way clearly*. You will be best *able* to *judge* whether under this, or any *circumstances*, you could not *contrive* an adequate *pretext* for *retiring* to some *spot* within the *Seven Provinces* or their dependencies, *until you* shall *receive* an answer *to* your *communications* to this *department*. But such a *retirement* ought to be so *managed* as to have nothing of the air *of design* or of *alienation* from the *existing rulers*. It would be a *delicate step*, and would require to be *thoroughly digested*. The only end proposed *by this suggestion* is that *you* may *shelter yourself* from *inconvenient importunities*.

"If amidst the *inevitable convulsions* personal *danger be apprehended*, no *line can be chalked by us* for *your guidance*, and *your own judgements* and *discretion must decide*. But without the most *unequivocal necessity* it is thought best that *you* should *not quit* the *country* until *you shall* be *so instructed*." *From the Secretary of State*, February 27, 1795. Ms. Words in italics were in cipher.

take any step that could cause particular remark, and if I have not made myself violent friends and admirers in the party, by subscribing to their clubs and joining in their processions, neither have I made myself obnoxious by any conduct or remarks that could be offensive to them. The other neutral Ministers and even the Portuguese have constantly remained here. I have found them all very polite obliging and friendly.

I have the same acknowledgment to make with respect to the French Representatives and Generals who have been in this country. It is due to them all excepting Sieyès, who in the only conversation I had with him spoke of the government of the United States in a manner different from the others, and who was answered by me in a manner equally different from that I had used with the rest. I have related the conversation in a letter to the Secretary of State.

I am, &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

THE HAGUE, June 29, 1795.

. . . . . .

My friend, T. H. Perkins, who was here some time since, had already informed me of the discomfiture the Jacobinical heroes had suffered in Boston, by the loss of Honestus's election.[1]

His *Chronicle* printer,[2] the Tom Tit twittering on this goose's back, cannot fight, it seems, his little wish to be malicious against me. He will not forgive me for having put some truth and justice into his paper. It was such a

[1] John Coffin Jones was elected and Benjamin Austin, Jr., defeated in the Senatorial choice.

[2] The printers of the *Independent Chronicle* were Thomas Adams and Benjamin Larkin.

violence to the personal character of the man, and the political character of the print, as would have made him my enemy for ever, if he had dared to be the enemy of any man. The American minister neither went to England with the Stadtholder, nor remained at the Hague *under the protection* of General Pichegru. He remained at his post under the protection of the Laws of Nations; that is, of certain usages and principles to the printer and editor of the *Chronicle* unknown, but which all civilized human beings hold in singular veneration, and which General Pichegru as well as the other French generals and representatives of the people who have been in this country, took particular pains to preserve inviolate. It did not once enter their minds that the minister of a neutral and friendly nation could be a subject of protection to them; but they were anxiously solicitous that none of the *rights* annexed to the character should suffer the minutest injury from them, and strange as it may seem to the aforesaid printer and editor, they universally valued very highly the *reputation* of being scrupulously observant of the laws of nations. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, 27 July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

The public affairs of the country where I now reside afford at this time but an indifferent topic of correspondence. In the general scale of Europe it is of so little comparative importance, that nothing less than a conquest or a revolution can make its current events interesting enough to be an object of communication beyond the Atlantic. Both these great political changes have taken place since my arrival here, both have been completed, and leave the nation

in a state of dull tranquility that is equally barren for narration and for observation. In my last letter was inclosed a translation of the plan proposed for calling a Convention. The subject has been discussed in the several Provincial Assemblies. That of Holland proposes to accept the plan with an amendment, whereby the National Convention shall be invested with *all the powers* of the *whole Batavian people*. That of Friesland objects against assembling a Convention at all, and proposes to remain in their present state of constitution. The reason of this difference is that Holland is desirous of *unity* and *indivisibility*, and that Friesland prefers the federal union as it now stands. It is the differing interest that occasions this differing opinion, and it will not improbably be a source of long discord, for each of the parties attaches to its own opinion that obstinacy and bigotry that interest always communicates to political opinions. As to the construction of the intended convention, a single assembly without control, it is considered on both sides as an immaterial circumstance, and they are entirely satisfied with the idea that it will be a perfect imitation of the French Assembly. It is remarkable that they pride themselves upon this imitation at the very moment when the French Assembly proclaim their abandonment of the system, from a conviction of the manifold injuries it has done them.

It has been mentioned in a former letter that a Committee of eleven members of the French Convention had been appointed to prepare what they called the *organic laws* for the Constitution. It was an expedient contrived by the party now dominant, to get rid entirely of the Constitution of 1793, which had undergone the form of an acceptance by the people, but the character of which is too anarchical for the public opinion of this time, and which had the more unpardonable defect of having been made by the Jacobin

party. The commission of eleven have therefore made their report.[1] They propose another Constitution altogether different from that of 1793, and it is now under the discussion of the Assembly. The plan contains less of the wildfire than was so liberally scattered through the other, and the article of the declaration of rights, which sanctifies the right of insurrection, is removed. The legislative body is to be divided, but the two houses are not invested with equal powers. The council of *elders* (that is the Senate,) will have no right to originate any laws, but only a negative upon those proposed by the council of five hundred or Representatives. The executive power is to consist of a Directory of five persons, appointed by the Legislature, without a negative upon the laws, and to be presided alternately by each of its members for three months at a time. You can easily judge without any further details whether this Constitution is likely to establish the reign of liberty in France, any more than those that have been already proposed or accepted.[2] The reporter of the Committee, Boissy d'Anglas, is a member who has rapidly risen to reputation since the fall of Robespierre, and is at this time perhaps the most popular member of the Convention. His discourse which accompanied the report was received with great applause, and as it gives a good idea of the fashionable political doctrines of the present day, I shall send you a copy of it. You will perceive that he quotes your authority in support of a divided legislature, but his very quotation shows that he knew as little of you as of your book.

Whether the Constitution will be adopted or not, is very problematical; whether it will ever be put into execution, is much more so. The Convention itself labors under a great

[1] June 23.

[2] The proposed measure is described in *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 392.

load of unpopularity, being equally detested by the Jacobins and by the Royalists. Great numbers of the Moderates are said to be of this latter description. For several months past they have supported the Convention, only because they were afraid that its dissolution would restore the reign of the Jacobins; but they grow stronger, or imagine so, from day to day, and they begin already to declare against the Convention themselves. This disposition is so clearly manifested that another crisis may be soon expected, and the present appearance is, that it will produce a reconciliation and coalition between the Convention and the Jacobin party. The struggle will as usual end in a convulsion, and that will terminate in a Revolution. But whether it will be a renewal of the 31st of May,[1] or a counterpart to the 10th of August,[2] it is impossible at this distance to anticipate.

As far as can be judged from the conversation of the French men that I meet with here, and from the accounts of observing persons who have recently been at Paris, the whole nation is heartily tired of revolutions, sighing for peace and tranquility, but as little prepared for any system that shall procure it as they ever have been at any time. The Jacobin party is numerous and powerful, though loaded with an immense weight of odium, and at this time really persecuted and oppressed. The Royalists, on the other hand, are the more formidable, because no man knows what their strength is; for the course of their Revolutions has been so rapid, so violent and eccentric, that at one period or another political hypocrisy has been to some an asylum, to others a weapon, but practised by all, so that there is not a man perhaps in the Republic, who has not professed the most contradictory creeds at different periods. This

[1] Insurrection of 12 Prairial, 1793.

[2] 1792, the date of the attack on the Tuileries.

dissimulation loses all its depravity in its universality and in the horrible necessity which occasioned it, but it has left an indelible impression; it has annihilated all confidence between man and man, and introduced an universal distrust in its stead. The people in general and the Convention declare themselves equally hostile to both parties. The aversion against royalty is deeply rooted in the nation, and acquires a tenfold vigor from the dread of seeing its restoration, accompanied by the return and triumph of the emigrants, whose property is the only pledge for the redemption of the national paper and for the recompense of the republican armies. In short there is no Revolution whatever but may be expected in that country, except one that shall give them peace and a regulated liberty. If in the most favorable circumstances the perfection of human legislation is scarcely adequate to the construction of a government, which may be at the same time strong to enforce the law and weak for any abuse of its power, it may without hesitation be pronounced *impossible* in France. I suppose the opinion is yet a *political heresy*, and like most other heresies it is an eternal truth.[1]

At the present moment Paris is in a state of violent agitation, and the inveteracy of the parties discovers itself, as it always does, upon the most trivial occasions. The treaties and the Convention are the stages upon which it is discovered. You will have heard doubtless before this

[1] "But as to a free government, a government of laws, or any government other than that of opinion, that is of parties, it is not to be expected either in France or in this country. How many more years they will spend in making constitutions, I know not, but that they will never make a constitution and execute it is evident to every dispassionate observer. It is impossible to say how long an alchymist will hunt for the philosopher's stone without being discouraged; but those who imagine he will find it are blessed with a stronger built faith than has been allotted to me." *To Abigail Adams*, July 30, 1795. Ms.

reaches you of a song called the *Reveil du peuple*. It has neither the poetical nor the musical merit of the Hymne des Marseillais, but it is a bitter effusion against the Jacobins, the Terrorists, and the system of blood. It has therefore become a great favorite among the people of Paris, and at the same time the famous hymn has lost much of its popularity. Within the last few weeks they have become real badges of party, and at the theatres the spectators have frequently refused to hear the Marseillaise, and have called constantly for the other.

On the 14th of this month the National Convention celebrated the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastille. They had the Marseillaise hymn performed in their presence, and, inspired by a moment of enthusiasm or by a settled policy, they joined with great ardor in the chorus. One of the members immediately proposed, and the assembly as immediately decreed, that this hymn should be sung every morning by the guard that attends the Convention. The next day the guard was surrounded by a crowd of people who would not allow them to execute the decree, and they themselves refused to do it. The Convention without repealing their decree passed to the order of the day on being informed that it was not complied with. At the theatre all the patriotic songs were excluded excepting only the *Reveil du peuple*. The Committees of Government prohibited the singing of any songs whatever upon the theatres other than those belonging to the plays performed. The actors obeyed, but the song was sung by the spectators themselves, not without manifestations of indignation against the Convention.

In the mean time the rebellion in the Vendée has again assumed a formidable aspect, and four or five thousand emigrants from England have landed to join the Royalists

in those Departments. They are said to be blocked up, however, in Quiberon, and a force so considerable is sent into that quarter, that the total extinction of the rebellion is promised, and expected very soon to be effected.

The armies in Spain retain their superiority, but do not exert it to advance any further into the country. That of Italy, after a number of successive engagements during the ten last days of June, has abandoned its stations upon the river of Genoa; but Kellermann tells his troops that they must not call it a retreat. The armies on the Rhine are still employed upon the siege of Mentz, and it is supposed they will soon attempt to cross the river. At sea there has been another naval engagement, in which France has lost three more ships of the line, besides a frigate in the Mediterranean. Their maritime war has invariably been as disastrous as that by land has been successful.

The German Diet have come to a formal conclusion to enter into negotiations with France under the mediation of the King of Prussia. This negotiation will certainly be protracted considerably, because the terms for which the parties are prepared differ so widely, that they cannot immediately be brought together.

The Russian fleet, stipulated by the late treaty with Great Britain to be sent into the North Sea, has arrived at Copenhagen, and sailed again from thence. There are twelve ships of the line and eight frigates, and they have English pilots on board, who were sent to join them at Copenhagen.

The British Government persist with a perseverance which nothing but the national hatred against France could support in the continuance of the war. To ruin totally the maritime power of their enemy is their object, and they have been but too successful in effecting it. They purchase it however at a price sufficiently dear. The debt accumulates,

the people really suffer much by the war and are weary of it. The revolutionists are active, restless, indefatigable, and will finally centre all their efforts in one point which they consider as an inevitable step towards all the others that they have at heart. The sword of Damocles hangs over the head that wears the crown; it is now protected only by a degree of personal consideration possessed by the wearer. But the apparent successor and his brothers are not only destitute of this shield, but are continually laying themselves open to attack and daily degrading themselves in the public opinion. Their defects to all appearance are irretrievable, for they proceed from weakness of character and debility of understanding. The combustible materials are collecting in such masses there that they cannot fail sooner or later to meet a spark that shall enkindle them, and the explosion of a Revolution will revenge the injuries of the human race.

The prophecy of Rousseau, that the ancient monarchies of Europe cannot last much longer, becomes more and more infallible. Hereditary prerogatives and hereditary privileges are in their own nature invidious and odious to those excluded from them. They have been maintained only by long and undisputed establishment. From the moment when the great mass of the nations in Europe were taught to inquire, why is this or that man possessed of such or such an enjoyment at our expense, and of which we are deprived, the signal was given of a civil war in the social arrangement of Europe, which cannot finish but with the total ruin of their feudal constitutions. The opinions upon the theory of government are wild, discordant and absurd, but the republican spirit is diffused everywhere. The essence of all the republicanism to be met with consists in aversion to the principle of inheritance. But this aversion is most extensively propagated; it is profound and inveterate. It must

eventually lead to the destruction of the relics which yet remain of the feudal aristocracy. Whether the arts, the sciences and the civilization of Europe will not all perish with it, must yet remain a problem. If the experience of France gives an argument for analogy, nothing but the return of barbarism is to be expected. The French revolutions of the last six years have contributed more to the restoration of Vandalic ignorance, than whole centuries can retrieve, and their progress has given an alarming proof of what would have been deemed a frantic delirium, had it been predicted. It is that the *arts* and *sciences* themselves, that genius, talents, and learning, are in the most enlightened periods of the human history liable to become objects of proscription to political fanaticism. The myrmidons of Robespierre were as ready to burn libraries as the followers of Omar; and if the principle is finally to prevail, which puts the scepter of sovereignty into the hands of the European Sans Culottes, they will soon reduce everything to the level of their own ignorance.

In this country the revolutionary principles have indeed made but little progress. The mass of the people is attached as much as ever, perhaps more, to their old constitution, or rather to the House of Orange. The caresses of the new administration have made few converts among the troops, who desert and quit the service in such numbers that the national army will be reduced to nothing. There is so little dependence placed upon the Swiss, that the States General have determined to disband them. An army of twenty-five thousand Frenchmen is to be employed in the pay of this Republic instead of that which is melting away before the Revolution. The patriotic party is divided, one assembly springs up in opposition to another, club thunders against club, and the confusion of Babel would soon be

followed by the dispersion of the builders, but for the influence and control of their new allies, whose armies are pledged for the maintenance of the public tranquility.

By the last vessel that went from Rotterdam to Boston I sent you the work of Martens and the *Politique des Cabinets de l'Europe*, which contains a mémoire of Mr. Turgot during his ministry, very deserving of an American's attention. By the present opportunity I send several new publications lately received from Paris. They discover in some degree the state of the public mind, and furnish materials for the history of a philosophical revolution. The man that can read them and retain an ardor for revolutions must indeed possess more philosophy than humanity.[1]

I am, &c.

TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

THE HAGUE, August 15, 1795.

. . . . . .

The object of the consular office is the benefit of merchants and mariners in countries other than their own; it is to procure facilities and conveniences for them that this institution is appropriated. The legislature will therefore necessarily consult their feelings and opinions, and I am afraid that they would consider *consular powers* rather as a burden upon them than as an advantage to them. The spirit of commerce is averse to every species of restraint,

[1] "The character of the American people is so universally and essentially republican; civil and political liberty is a possession so thoroughly incorporated in the existence of every individual, that I cannot believe, and never have believed the aristocratic faction, which has been the theme of so much newspaper declamation among us, to be any thing else than one of the loci communes of men who were anxious to obtain the favor of their fellow citizens, by affecting an extraordinary anxiety for their welfare." *To N. Freeman*, August 1, 1795. Ms.

and it would probably consider in that light every power of any utility that could be given to a consul.

An increase of emoluments would meet with the same opposition. The system of economy in all public expenses is in general carried further with us than an enlightened interest would advise, and a generous compensation will not readily be obtained for the services of an office, which in the minds of our countrymen is of questionable utility.

The consular appointments of the government have in several instances been unpopular, but the difficulty of filling every place well would not disappear by an augmentation of powers or of compensation. It would even be increased in proportion to them, upon the natural principle that the character of the officer should be confidential in proportion to the magnitude of the trust. To make the office an object of acceptance to American citizens qualified to fill it well, must be made very expensive, for there are many European ports where there is a great commerce with the United States, and where no American citizen qualified for such a station resides. In all such places, if the principle that a consul *must* be a citizen is established, the office alone must be made an inducement for a respectable American citizen to leave his country, and every thing that is precious and valuable annexed to that name, in order to fill it, or there must be no consul at the place.

The misfortune in this case is that almost all the arguments that can apply to the subject are two edged swords, that may be used on both sides of the question: for instance all the examples of misconduct mentioned in your letter might be adduced as reasons for not augmenting the authority or profits of the office. Your argument stands thus: some of the consuls betray their trust; therefore increase the importance of the office and appoint men who will not betray

the trust. But the opposite arguments: some of the consuls betray their trust; you cannot get confidential men for the office without incurring a heavier expense than the public utility of their services in it will warrant; therefore do not make the office more important. If the powers already given are abused, do not give others, the abuse of which would be more pernicious. If the trifling compensation now given is yet undeserved, be careful not to increase it. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE[1]

No. [EDMUND RANDOLPH]

THE HAGUE, August 20, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

From the present situation of the nations of Europe, and from reflections to which my own experience as well as that of others has given occasion, it has occurred to me, that some advantage would be derived from the establishment of some general rules and principles by the government of the United States, to serve as directions to their agents, with respect to the delivery of passports, or any other papers, tending to procure in behalf of the persons to whom they were given, the enjoyment of advantages attending the character of an American citizen.

In many parts of Europe at this time a passport is a paper of indispensable necessity to every traveller, and indeed to every individual in a country other than his own. Among the Americans, who are at this time in great numbers in different parts of Europe, some few have taken the precaution to provide themselves with passports from the Depart-

[1] Randolph retired from the office of Secretary of State, August 20, and Pickering was acting Secretary until December 10, when he received a commission as Secretary.

ment of State; but the far greater number come from home without any, and of course apply for them to the Ministers or other agents of the United States, in the countries where they respectively are, when they find the need of such a paper. It happens not unfrequently under these circumstances, that a real citizen of the United States and fully entitled to their protection, appears to demand a passport, without having any such proof of his citizenship, as the rigor of all judicial tribunals would require as evidence of facts. At the same time there are great numbers of impostors who often endeavor fraudulently to obtain passports as Americans. The inattention, which is common with those of the first class, facilitates the success of the others, and where the delivery of passports is left entirely to the discretion of every individual agent, there must be danger that the protection of the United States will be extended where it is not due, or denied where it is.

The special evidence of citizenship required by some of the consuls, is a certificate from the proper office in any one of the United States. This is a species of evidence so customary and apparently so substantial, that in the present state of things it cannot reasonably be rejected as incompetent to authorize the demand of a passport. But in truth it is a species of evidence often possessed by persons who have very little claim to the protection of the United States, besides its being liable to pass into hands that have no right to it at all.

There is many an European who, having resided a year or two in some one of the United States, and having been naturalized for his personal convenience, has returned to Europe with his certificate in his pocket, which he now employs to claim all the privileges of the American name. In conformity to the universal practise, I have thought

myself not at liberty to refuse passports to naturalized citizens; but it has appeared to me that when an *adopted* member of any political association ceases to bear any portion of its burthens, he cannot in reason and justice claim its correlative protection. The late naturalization law will, however, reform the tendency to such abuses in future.[1]

The flag of the United States is liable to the same misuse with the character of citizen, and owing to the same reasons. The advantages of a neutral flag, insulted and abused as it has been, and still is, are however so great that every expedient has been used to procure it for many vessels that have never been out of the European seas. The consuls have been applied to for papers to serve as substitutes to those which belong to vessels of the United States, and some of them have accordingly delivered papers more or less irregular. It has been observed to me repeatedly by Europeans, that the American flag is often worn by vessels having no right to it, and it has been a subject of complaint from several Americans, whose fair trade is injured by this unauthorized participation. In one of the instances mentioned in my last letter, the captain of an English built vessel assumed the flag of the United States without any papers whatever, and upon the sole ground that he was himself an American citizen.[2] It is not supposed that the mere personal title of the captain can authorize the employment of the American colors. Whether any papers that can be delivered by a consul have more efficacy to communicate the right, is at least questionable; but if consular papers are understood to have a validity for this effect, it would perhaps be useful

[1] Law of January 29, 1795, *Statutes at Large*, I. 414.

[2] Charles Cowing, whose arrest came to the notice of Adams through Joshua Barney, then in command of a French ship of the line.

that their discretion should be guided in the delivery of them by the instructions of the government.

Such instructions may possibly be especially necessary to those consuls of the United States who are themselves foreigners, and from their particular situations and interests, may be more susceptible of giving an extension rather too liberal to the participation of privileges that belong properly to Americans or citizens of a neutral nation.

The consuls with whom I have been in regular correspondence make repeated complaints of the footing of the consular establishment at present. They are of opinion that the powers and emoluments annexed to the office are equally incompetent. The representations of Mr. Delius [1] have heretofore been transmitted to your department, and I understand from Mr. Bourne that he has more than once written to you upon the subject himself.

The relative situation of the United States towards the nations of Europe since the commencement of the present maritime war is new, and its state of neutrality naturally occasions a variety of combinations, which may deserve the attention of the government in a greater degree than their intrinsic importance could claim. The misuse of the flag, the juggling of a passport, or even the occasional irregular employment of official means for the furtherance of *foreign* commercial speculations, may be in every single instance of minor importance; but when the examples are frequently repeated, when they *may* be attended with consequences involving more or less the national interest, and when they result from a state of things which, although temporary, will perhaps be frequently renewed, it is viewed as an obligation of duty to those within whose observation such facts are placed to give notice of them.

[1] Arnold Delius, of Bremen.

With respect to passports, it might be of public utility that the American agents be instructed to deliver them in such cases as the government may think proper to prescribe, and upon the previous production of some special evidence in support of the demand. But in order to avoid an unfavorable operation of any such regulation upon many real American citizens, they must be in general aware of the importance to their own interest, that they should always take passports, or at least the evidence upon which they may be entitled to demand them, before they sail from the United States. Upon the subject of the flag, some sort of directions particular to those consuls or agents who are not citizens of the United States, may prevent the repetition of abuses which have taken place.[1]

I have the honor, &c.

LETTER OF CREDENCE

To our Great and Good Friend His Britannic Majesty

Great and Good Friend.

To testify to your Majesty the sincerity of the government of the United States in its negotiations, I have transmitted to John Quincy Adams, Minister Resident of the United States of America at the Hague, the Ratification of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, concluded and signed on the 19th day of November, 1794, by the Plenipotentiaries of your Majesty and of the United States: and the said John Quincy Adams is instructed to take the necessary measures for the exchange of the Ratifications. I beseech your Majesty, therefore, to give full credence to whatever he shall say to you, on the part of the United States, concerning the same; and to receive the said Ratification in the name of, and on the part of, the United States of America, when it shall be

[1] See *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 320.

tendered by him. I pray God to have your Majesty in his holy keeping.

Written at Philadelphia this 25th day of August in the year of our Lord 1795.

(Signed) GEO. WASHINGTON.

By the special command of the President of the United States.

(Signed) TIMOTHY PICKERING,

at this time executing the office of Secretary of State.

INSTRUCTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, August 25, 1795.

Separate instructions for Mr. Adams, relative to the exchange of ratifications, which Mr. Deas will be directed to execute, if Mr. Adams does not go over before the 20th Day of October, 1795.

SIR,

The first part of the business, for which you are called to London by my letter of the 14 instant, is the exchange of ratifications of the late treaty between the United States and Great Britain.

The documents, now transmitted, as relating thereto, are 1, a copy of that letter; 2, a printed but authentic copy of the treaty and resolution of the Senate advising the ratification; 3, a copy of the memorial from the Department of State to the British minister plenipotentiary near the United States; and 4, a letter from the President to his Britannic majesty, indicating the functions, which you are destined to fulfil.

At the earliest possible moment after your arrival in London, you will communicate to the proper persons belonging to the British ministry, your mission, as stated in the memorial; and request that the conferences necessary to its conclusion, may be expedited.

When you shall come into conference, you will declare, that you are possessed of the ratification, as it was promised in the memorial; but that you are instructed to inquire into the existence of a

late order, said to be issued under the authority of his Britannic majesty, for the seizure of the provision vessels, even of neutral nations.[1] If the order does not exist, or existing does not operate on the vessels of the United States, you will proceed to accomplish the exchange of ratifications, as is hereinafter mentioned. If the order does exist, and does operate on the vessels of the United States, you will make such representations, as that order shall suggest relative to the interests and situation of the United States; to the end that it may be removed; and particularly, that the ratification of the President must not be construed into an admission of the legality of the said order. Minute instructions cannot now be given, concerning that order, as our accounts of it are very imperfect. But if after every prudent effort, you find that it cannot be removed, its continuance is not to be an obstacle to the exchange of ratifications.

When, therefore, these preliminaries as to the order shall be finished, you will produce the President's ratification; and offer to exchange the same, in behalf of the United States, for an equivalent ratification on the part of his Britannic majesty; that is, for a ratification, corresponding with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The negotiations to be made after the exchange of ratifications will be marked out in other instructions.

If on the part of the British King a ratification shall be exchanged, conformably with that of the President; then you will immediately dispatch, by the most expeditious and safe conveyances, three copies of the British ratification, addressed to this Department. For the attainment of expedition and safety, you will be at liberty to incur a reasonable expense. Congress will meet on the first Monday in December next, and it is therefore desireable that the British ratification should be here early enough for the taking of certain necessary steps, concerning the treaty before that time.

[1] This order in council was issued in April, 1795, but the text was not published. It was soon after revoked, and compensation made for seizures under it was obtained under Article VII of the Jay treaty.

You will also, in the event of an exchange of ratifications, urge that orders be immediately given for the execution of the second article, respecting the evacuation of the posts, and for the proper measures, which are thereby provided to be taken by concert between the government of the United States and the British Governor General in America for settling the previous arrangements, which may be necessary, respecting the delivery of the said posts.

The agreement which is to be made in pursuance of the 8th article, respecting the pay of commissioners, will also be attended to. In the fixing of the quantum, you will observe due economy. Mr. Hammond has intimated £1500 sterling per annum to each; except the commissioners for determining the river St Croix, for whom £1000 per annum was proposed. Beyond these sums you are not to go, and you will endeavor to reduce them as low as propriety will admit.

If his Britannic majesty shall refuse to ratify on the condition required by the Senate, you will say, that being possessed of only one form of ratification, you will without delay forward to the President his said majesty's determination; and will wait without taking a definite step, until you shall receive further orders. In this case you will perceive the importance of the information to us; and that it will be necessary, unless you have at least two immediate opportunities, to hire an advice boat to bring the intelligence to Philadelphia, or to some port, near at hand.

If Mr. Pinckney should unexpectedly return to London before this part of the business is finished, you will place it in his hands (he being the ordinary minister, and having co-operated in the negotiation); unless, indeed, it shall appear to Mr. Pinckney unadviseable for him to enter into it. By the special command of the President.

TIMOTHY PICKERING,
at this time executing the office of Secretary of State.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, August 31, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

The total defeat of the emigrants who had effected a descent in Britanny, as mentioned in my last letter, and the peace between France and Spain, signed at Basle on the 22nd of July, and since ratified by both parties, are events of such consequence that they will be fully known in America before this letter can reach you. It is scarcely possible that any interesting intelligence should be first conveyed from hence to America. The local position of the country forbids it, and although I have constantly taken all possible pains to communicate the most recent news, as far as I can conjecture from the dates when I presume my letters have been received, I must conclude that in general they have only been corroborative of accounts contained in newspapers already out of date.

A circumstance which upon the brilliant theories of human perfectibility ought to be considered as much more important than either of the former, is the adoption by the Convention of the Constitution lately proposed by the Committee of Eleven. Several considerable alterations have been the result of a discussion which has lasted nearly two months, but the division of the legislative body into two Councils, and the attribution of the executive power to a third assembly of five persons with the title of *Directory*, are retained. The people and the armies are still to pronounce upon the whole plan, and then nothing will remain but to destroy it by another revolution, which will probably take place in less than a thousand years.

It is worth remarking that in the midst of the deliberations upon this *democratic* constitution (for they still give it

that epithet without any scruples,) the *Great* Sieyès, as one of my honest Dutch friends calls him, came out with another democratic Constitution, upon a plan entirely new and entirely his own. This prodigy of genius consisted in the invention of three or four new words, and in a sort of amalgamation of the system proposed by the Committee of eleven, with an institution similar to that of the Parliaments under the *ancien régime*. His legislature was to be merely a judicial tribunal, whose functions should be to decide between a petitioning assembly and a government. But as three assemblies were not enough for him, he proposed a fourth, whose sole functions should be to make such alterations as from time to time should be found necessary in the existing Constitution. The great Sieyès applauds himself and congratulates his country for having originated the luminous idea of this institution, and indeed some persons are of opinion that this Assembly would be more constantly busy than any of the others. The Convention, however, unanimously rejected the plan, and Sieyès the great has doubtless put it back into his porte-feuille, to be used upon the next occasion that shall offer for making a democratic constitution for France.

He did not, however, suffer the occasion to pass by without repeating the elegant *pleasantry* of Franklin, of Mirabeau, and of Condorcet, upon the *system of balances*. Upon this subject, together with an abundance of witticisms from the very refuse of commonplace, he advanced several things, for which it is impossible to say whether the credit is to be given partly to his ignorance, or whether it is all due to deliberate intention and a philosophical disregard for truth.

He said for instance that the idea of separating the *Constituent* authority from that of the ordinary legislative power originated in France, that it was a glorious discovery for

which all the credit was due to the French nation, and that it was made in the year 1789.

In his past-vamp'd-future-old-reviv'd-new piece of declamation against the *balancing system*, he says:

I shall not insist upon the example of England, because the hereditary stain that is annexed to the system there, is a defect not essential to the system itself and cannot fairly be charged to it, but only examine what the practical effect of the system is *everywhere else where it is established.* The double legislature is, as has been said, like two horses pulling the chariot in opposite directions. With all their pulling the chariot moves not an inch, *until the royal coachman mounts the box.* Now you do not chuse to have a royal coachman. Wherever this system prevails the legislative assemblies are mere formal shadows, and the real legislator is the executive power.

These opinions, or pretended opinions, *thus expressed*, appear to me very remarkable, and they are the more so because they come from a man, who seems to affect the government of the earth, who has in fact that of France in a great degree, and who possesses all the qualities by which the late Roman historian says that Augustus was conducted to that of the world.

The primary Assemblies who are to decide upon the Constitution are to be convoked on the 6th of next month, and the Constitutional Legislature is to be elected immediately after. The precipitation with which the business is conducted is grounded upon the necessity they are under to leave no time for the formation of cabals against the acceptance. There is another measure which cannot easily be reconciled with the Constitutional theory, but which may be legitimated by the omnipotent argument of necessity. At the first election for the Constitutional Legislature the choice of the people is not to have an unlimited liberty.

Five hundred members of the present Convention must be chosen, or rather the Assembly has decreed that it will change itself into a Constitutional Legislature, one-third of the numbers of which are to be rechosen, or changed, by a new election. They are afraid of the consequences that would result at the present moment from an appeal to the voice of the people, without prescribing two-thirds of what that voice must answer.[1]

Upon the same principle at one of the last sessions of the Convention they dissolved at one stroke all the popular societies throughout the Republic. Their books and papers are ordered to be delivered up to the respective municipalities, and the halls of their assembly are to be shut up forever. Such is the present system. The popular societies have been the most efficacious of all the instruments employed by the tyranny under which France has recently suffered, and they are formally proscribed by the proposed constitution. But they appear not less than Archangel ruined, and are still extremely formidable.[2]

[1] The decrees of Fructidor 5 and 13, which led to the overthrow of this Constitution of 1795.

[2] "It is not surprising that the French government should so openly discountenance these Societies in this country, because, independent of the numerous evils, which their own experience has convinced them to be the result of such institutions, they perhaps expect to find from that quarter the greatest impediments to the species of influence which they intend to possess and use in the concerns of this republic. The clubs are restless and unmanageable, and being spread all over the country, would be much more unwieldy as objects of direction, than authorities legally constituted, and assembled in one spot. Nor is it an unreasonable conjecture, that in the progress of these institutions, a coalition between those of France and of the Low Countries for their mutual support may be attempted; and that it may be considered as very formidable to the French government. On the other hand, the complacency of the legal assemblies here towards the same clubs, and even the parade of eulogium they bestow on them, is not less accountable; it is founded upon the consciousness that the clubs internally have all the powers of the people in their hands, and that the legislative bodies have no support, other than that of the French troops." *To the Secretary of State*, July 25, 1795. Ms.

But the victory of the party called Moderates over that of the Jacobins is so nearly complete, that it has already divided itself into two parties, who are upon terms of mutual opposition, and may very soon be at open war. They consist on one side of the fragments of the Brissotine party, and on the other of the persons who contrived and executed the catastrophe of Robespierre, and who on that account are called the Thermidorian party. The present subjects of difference between them appear to be the different degrees of extension that they are disposed to give to the *reaction* of the Revolution. The Brissotines are the strongest in the Convention, but the other party seems to coincide more with the present temper of the popular opinion. The renewal of the legislative Assembly in two houses, and the supposed transition from a Revolutionary to a constitutional government, will undoubtedly be a critical moment, and will produce new political phenomena for observation.

They suppose in Paris that their peace with Spain will produce of necessity a rupture between the latter and Great Britain, as the cession of the Spanish part of St. Domingo is contrary to the Treaty of Utrecht, which will furnish a pretext, and the defenceless opulence of the Spanish commerce will give a motive to the British ministry. It seems as if no calculation can be too extravagant for the desperation of that government, but I have as yet no faith in their making war against Spain for the present, though there is no doubt but it is wished at Paris they may.

They are also dissatisfied with the treaty between Great Britain and the United States, as I wrote you more than three months since that they would be, whatever the contents of the treaty might be. At that time they did not blush to say that to be upon bad terms with Britain was an obligation of gratitude incumbent upon the United States;

and at present they are displeased with the articles because they are so with the treaty itself.

What effects their influence will produce in America I know not. But that it will work with all its power, I am very certain. I have reason to suppose, however, that they think their two last Ministers in the United States have spent them too much money there, and the principal reason for which they recalled the last was the expense of his bad bargains, which have hitherto procured them nothing but grain and flour. Their new Minister's instructions will doubtless oblige him to greater economy. I know not whether they will lose their influence on that account.

The present war is at this time nothing more in reality than a contest of national rivalship between France and Britain. The interest of all the maritime nations is opposed to the success of the latter, and the French naval power has suffered such heavy losses, and is so much reduced, that they can henceforth have no hopes of being able to resist that of their enemy, but by uniting all the maritime force in Europe with their own against it. They are also desirous that the United States should be engaged on their side, for the benefit of an assistance negative in its nature, as Britain would be deprived of the great and growing profit of her commerce with us in the case of a war. The system of neutrality which has been pursued with so much firmness and perseverance by the United States has never been perfectly relished by the French governing men. It becomes more and more unpleasant to them in proportion as the necessity of peace is felt more forcibly by themselves, and the policy employed by them for effecting their purpose is to attack the President of the United States. This has been, I am fully convinced, the real system from the time when Genet was sent, and it will be pursued with more or less consistency

until they succeed in drawing us into a war, or until they shall be at peace. The art of destroying reputations, if it had not always been well understood in France, might have attained a considerable degree of perfection merely by the experience of their last years. It has been practised with such universal success among themselves, by all their parties and under all their changes, that it is reduced to a regular system, the operation of which is merely mechanical.

The affairs of this country though intimately connected with those of France bear an aspect entirely different. The popular societies which are altogether proscribed in that Republic are very powerful here. There is now in session at this place an assembly styling itself a central club, consisting of deputies from most of the clubs throughout the Province; there are others of the same kind in the other Provinces. The great object of their pursuit is the dissolution of the Provincial government, and the assembling of a National Convention for the whole people. This plan is extremely popular in this Province; it has met however with strenuous opposition from five of the others, but will finally prevail by the means of the popular societies.

In the meantime they are under a constant apprehension of being invaded on the part of Prussia. They have an army of twenty-five thousand French troops for their defence, but a great proportion of their own army has deserted.

They have at length made their appearance with their naval armament, and by the junction of all the forces they could muster they were two or three days at sea with six or eight ships of the line and as many frigates. But the condition of the ships was such that they could scarcely keep above water, and upon the first suspicion of the approach of the British and Russian fleet they returned to the Texel, where they now remain. They have recently

had one frigate taken after a severe action against superior force.

Their commerce in the meantime is a mere passive victim to the British force at sea, and their East India Company is losing all their ships one after the other, without being able to lift a hand for their protection.

The public treasury is empty. They have to pay between one and two hundred millions of florins for arrearages, the remainder of an hundred millions for the friendship of France, and the heavy expenses which daily accrue from their state of war, besides those to which they are at all times subjected.[1]

The plate of every individual has already been required for the public exigencies and delivered. A dry tax of six per cent upon all capitals is to be paid before the end of the year, and will be far from supplying the monies that are immediately wanted. The scarcity of provisions has been great, but much exaggerated; there have not been the symptoms of a famine, and the harvest now gathering is uncommonly favorable.

The scarcity has been also great in England. It is inconceivable how the government of that country retain all their force, and how the price of their funds is supported in the midst of their losses and defeats. Their naval success and the force of national antipathy are the only things that can account for it. They have not as yet discovered any intention whatever to negotiate with France, though it is pretended that a division has taken place in the Privy Council

[1] "The French assignats have never had a compulsive circulation here except in a very limited degree, and for the necessary supply of the French troops. Since the treaty of alliance, and since the French army in this country is engaged in the pay of this government, the assignats have no other course than as merchandize, and their price current is contained in the commercial paper enclosed; they are now at about forty-five for one." *To the Secretary of the Treasury*, September 8, 1795. Ms.

upon the subject. They are perhaps yet waiting for the result of new revolutions, which they expect will happen in France; but they will probably find themselves deceived in their hopes arising from that source. The campaign of this year will probably be productive of scarce any important effect, and it is very certain that no country can support long a war with an annual expense of twenty-four million sterling to keep a *status quo*. In short the true state of facts appears to be, that France and Britain are both reduced to the greatest extremity, and that at present they both persist in war from the sole hope that the enemy will first yield to their pressure of misery. Such is the usual issue of war.

I am, &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, September 12, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received two days ago your letter from New York of June 29. It gratified my highest ambition, as it testifies the approbation of the President and the Secretaries upon my conduct and correspondence, and my strongest affections, as it informed me of the health of my dearest friends.[1]

[1] "I have no language to express to you the pleasure I have received from the satisfaction you have given to the President and Secretary of State, as well as from the clear, comprehensive and masterly accounts in your letters to me of the public affairs of nations in Europe, whose situation and politics it most concerns us to know. Go on, my dear son, and by a diligent exertion of your genius and abilities, continue to deserve well of your father, but especially of your country. The more faithfully you have discharged and fulfilled your duty to me, the more anxious I have been lest I may not have fulfilled mine to you with so much punctuality." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, Quincy, April 26, 1795, Ms. Four of the letters were sent to President Washington, who wrote to John Adams, August 20, 1795: "They contain a great deal of interesting matter, and No. 9 [May 22] discloses much important information and political insight. Mr. J. Adams, your son, must

At the same time I received a letter from my brother Charles, and papers with accounts of popular movements in opposition to the treaty, which give me great anxiety. They were not indeed unexpected to me, because I have long since been satisfied that the most powerful engines of influence among us would be set at work upon this occasion. My letters from the month of May to this time will give you my opinions and conjectures on the subject; they are corroborated by the accounts that we now receive from America, and they give me great solicitude, as they renew the danger of war, which I had hopes was blown over for the present. It is a danger so much the more formidable, because I believe the intention is to draw the United States into it, merely to make tools of them, in order to procure advantageous terms for others, who would leave us in the well, after using our weight to get themselves out of it. It would be a war in which we should have everything to lose and nothing to gain; a war commenced against the will of almost the whole people, and which therefore under such a government as ours could not be carried on with success. The chain of consequences which present themselves to my mind as inevitable from such a source can afford but a wretched contemplation, and my greatest hopes of a more favorable futurity arise from firmness and resolution of the government.

The conduct of the British government is so well adapted to increasing our danger of war, that I cannot but suppose they are secretly inclined to produce it. An American cannot know, without seeing Europe to witness the fact, with

not think of retiring from the walk he is in. His prospects, if he continues in it are fair, and I shall be much mistaken if, in as short a period as can well be expected, he is not found at the head of the diplomatic corps, let the government be administered by whomsoever the people may choose." Ms.

what pleasure and exultation all the partizans of monarchy receive accounts of any popular commotions in America. The insurrection of the last summer was a delicious feast for them,[1] and they did not fail to make the most liberal use of it; they will undoubtedly do the same upon this occasion. They are all inimical to the government of the United States, because it furnishes a constant example to those who maintain the superior excellence of a Republican system. They wish to see some proof of extravagance or folly in America, which they can have the pleasure of attributing to the prevalence of republicanism, as they have done very successfully with respect to the frenzies of France.

As to the treaty itself, the objection to the condition of the twelfth article appears to be well grounded; it was not in the plan which was shown to me when I was in London, and of which I wrote you from thence, and I should have been surprised had it been submitted to on any account whatever. But in every other respect it still appears to me as it did at that time preferable to a war. I will even add at present, that it is in my mind preferable to no agreement at all, upon the principal subjects to which it refers.[2] But when people among us talk of Britain's being at her last gasp, and of her being totally ruined if the United States should fall upon her, we can but hope for the credit of the

[1] The "Whiskey Insurrection" of 1794.

[2] Jay believed that this article, relating to trade with the West Indies, broke the ice, "that is, it breaks in upon the [English] navigation act. The least stream from a mass of water passing through a bank will enlarge its passage. The very article stipulates that the arrangements to succeed it shall have in view the *further extension* of commerce." *Jay to Washington*, March 6, 1795. *Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*, IV. 170. Hamilton ("Camillus") considered that the Senate wisely regarded the article as "less liberal" than could with reason be expected. *Works*, V. 161. Objection was made to the proposal to prohibit the transportation in American vessels to any foreign country except Great Britain, of sugar, cotton, coffee, or molasses. The article was suspended by the Senate.

speaker, that his assertion is only unfounded and the result of ignorance.

The force of Great Britain is so far from being exhausted, that her maritime power was never at any period so great as it is at present. Her naval superiority is everywhere so indisputably established that in the Mediterranean, on the ocean, in the channel, or in the North sea, a French or a Dutch armed vessel can scarce venture out of an harbor without being intercepted. Scarce a week passes by without the coasts of this country's being insulted by her men of war, and in France there is not the smallest resistance attempted against the landing of emigrant expeditions from England, although one considerable corps of them has been exterminated after their descent was effected. The French frigates which during the last season were very successful against their British commerce have all been taken, or dare not keep the sea, and for several months past there has been scarce a single capture made by them, while all the ships of the Dutch East India Company are falling into the hands of their enemies, the helpless victims of the maritime impotence opposed against the British power.[1]

The state of their finances is equally far from being exhausted, and equally superior to those of France or of Holland. A loan of twenty-four millions sterling for the present

[1] "This inability for resistance has distressing consequences, as it leaves the commerce of this republic entirely defenceless; its losses have accordingly been very great, and information has lately been received of eight ships richly laden belonging to the East India Company having fallen into the hands of the English. This property is not as yet appropriated to the captors by right of conquest, but is retained in trust for such of the Dutch owners as are not under the influence of the French. It is not expected, however, that it will ever be restored, and the only condition upon which there is any such intention professed being the reëstablishment of the former government, would be infinitely more adverse to the present rulers than the loss of ten times as much property as can be within the reach of the English." *To the Secretary of State*, September 14, 1795. Ms.

year does not even diminish the price of their funds a single farthing.[1] They have kept up to the present time, when the season is almost past, and if twenty-four millions more should be called for in the course of three or four months, they will be found with the same facility. This profusion will be ruinous and destructive in its consequences I believe; but for the present it gives them a mischievous strength with which it would not be safe to contend, and the only good American policy is to keep as much as possible out of its reach, to remain aloof while the convulsive energy is operating, and to wait for the inevitable moment of subsequent weakness.[2]

The acting Government has likewise a power within the country which meets with no control. The parliamentary opposition has scarcely gained a fraction since the beginning of the war; and although there is a party in London and in some other commercial towns restless and which may become formidable, yet in general throughout the country the popular voice is unequivocally favorable to the ministerial system.

On the other hand I am very doubtful whether the French government would be disposed to contract any engagements which would bind them to a common cause with us. They would give us as many fair words as we could wish, but would stipulate nothing without a consideration more than adequate to it. But if they should even tempt us by the most unlimited obligations of inseparable participation, the

[1] *Annual Register*, 1795, 121.

[2] "I will not be answerable that we can much longer find funds, however necessary, for the war on a large scale, without serious ill-humor, the tendency to which is much promoted by the very short produce in Europe and America of the last year's harvests, and by the harshness of the present summer." *Lord Auckland to Hugh Elliot*, July 16, 1795. *Journal and Correspondence of Lord Auckland*, III. 309.

present state of their affairs is such as can inspire but little confidence in the permanency of their cooperation. They continue still to be victorious by land, and they may perhaps make advantageous treaties of peace with all the powers with which they are still at war, except Britain. But their internal situation is as unsettled, the parties among them are as numerous, as violent, and as ready to extinguish one another in blood as they have ever been. There is no confidence in the new Constitution by any of the parties, and the popular opinions are so wide from the present system of government, that the Convention appear to place all their dependance in *the armies*. The intention to employ them to the purpose of containing the people is attributed to the Convention, and has been in some measure acknowledged by some of the governing members. The tendency of their politics is towards a military government, but it will certainly not be firmly established without numerous struggles and violent convulsions. The policy pursued by all the European powers with whom they are now at peace is to live with them in a simple state of peace, but to form with them no engagements the validity of which would depend upon the permanency of the present order of things. Their future prospects exhibit a mere chaos of uncertainty, and it is not possible to form a rational opinion whether they will settle into any quiet and peaceable course of government, or whether they will continue to float alternately between anarchy and despotism, as the breath of their successive factions shall impel them. One thing alone is indubitable. It is that their present state will not be permanent. The only safe connection that can exist with them is that which would not be liable to follow the fate of their internal revolutions.

I inclose herewith a copy of their Constitution as it has

been agreed to by the Convention, and is now before the people and the *armies* for acceptance. It is presumed it will be adopted. You will observe that it has exploded many of the doctrines which but two or three years since were articles of political faith, that were not even susceptible of discussion. The sacred duty of insurrection has disappeared, the popular societies are constitutionally annihilated, the legislature is divided. The executive is invested with pomp, and splendor, and power, and even the heresy of checks and balances is very near becoming an article of orthodox creed. The Constitution is indeed not so absurd as the two former, but it will meet with the same fate. In America the great difficulty is to unite the people in the acceptance of a Constitution, but when once accepted it has at least some force and operation. In France nothing is easier than to procure the adoption of a Constitution, but this adoption is the only effect it produces.

The present Convention, however, in establishing this Constitution intend to continue themselves in possession of the legislative power, and the primary assemblies are commanded to choose two-thirds of the members into the first legislature. This decree is said to be extremely unpopular, not so much because it is violating every constitutional principle by the first act with which the Constitution is to commence, as because there are said not to be two-thirds, nor a tenth part, of that number, among the members of the Convention who possess any of the confidence of the people. It is scarcely possible indeed to conceal how unpopular the Assembly is with all parties, and the most conspicuous members at this time are not more exempt from the public censure than the rest.[1]

Their arms have not ceased to be victorious however, and

[1] See Taine, *The Revolution*, III. 424, 425.

within these few days they have effected the passage of the Rhine, which has long been expected, and taken Düsseldorf. They have also recently concluded and ratified a treaty of peace with the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel.[1]

The state of affairs in this country is equally unsettled, and depends entirely upon the nature of the changes that may take place in France. The great object of solicitude here is the formation of a National Convention; as this measure would by the simple fact dissolve the federal union of their old Constitution, it meets with great opposition in some of the provinces. The parties have grown warm, and by mutual irritation will soon kindle into factions. In this Province the antifederal party is almost unanimous, and the word of federalist is rendered as odious as it has been in France, or as the opposite word has been in America.

The present government, which has from necessity connected its fate with the success of the French, lives in constant terror of Prussia on the one side, and of Britain on the other. They are doomed to see their lot ascertained by the progress of events in which they have no participation, and to expect in helpless imbecility the issue which shall proscribe them as culprits, or fix them in their seats as the rulers of the land. The hundred millions of florins they are paying to France absorb all the supplies derived from the extreme resources to which they have already recurred. They have made what they call a junction of their naval forces, that is of the squadrons of the Texel and of Zeeland; their newspapers say that the whole number of their armament thus united amounted to upwards of twenty vessels great and small, but I have been assured that most of them were mere hulks that could scarcely keep above water, and they have long since taken refuge in the Texel from the danger of an

[1] William IX, who in 1803 received the title of "Elector" William I.

English fleet,[1] which now cruises on the coast and is frequently seen from the shore at Schevening [Scheveningen].

A Minister Plenipotentiary from the French Republic has arrived here a few days since.[2] We have hitherto visited only *by cards*, in the style of etiquette still preserved in their diplomacy, so that I have not seen him. The corps diplomatique here is already very much reduced. The Minister from Denmark is already gone,[3] those of Portugal and Sweden[4] will soon follow; they go upon various pretexts, but the real motive in all probability is to avoid the necessity of acknowledging the Convention that is impending. I shall then be the only accredited Minister remaining, but I have my instructions and shall therefore be at ease.

They have determined here to recall Mr. Van Berckel, who is to be directed to take leave in the most friendly manner, giving the express assurance that his recall is owing solely to the intention of their High Mightinesses to send another person in his stead.[5] That other person is a Mr. Van Polanen, a Zeeland Patriot, who is already in America, having some years ago found a refuge there from public oppression and private misfortune. I have seen his lady here, who is much esteemed; he is also as well spoken of as the virulence of parties will admit.

Mr. Van Berckel's recall I understand is owing to his having dismissed or suspended a Dutch consul, for rejoicing at

[1] Commanded by Admiral Adam Duncan, afterwards Viscount Duncan of Camperdown.

[2] Jean François Noël (1755–), who entered upon his office September 5. Masson sketches his career and thus sums it up: "Noël est le véritable modèle du pion qui se croit homme d'État." *Le Département des Affaires Étrangères pendant la Revolution*, 163.

[3] Baron de Schubart. [4] Comte de Löwenhielm.

[5] Pieter J. van Berckel, who had been minister plenipotentiary of the United Netherlands to the United States since 1783.

the emancipation of this country. At least that is the reason given. But they have in general recalled all their ministers who were attached to the former government.

Mr. Van Lynden, who was Ambassador at London, is now appointed to the Court of Denmark.

Mr. Dumas has finally obtained from the States General a resolution for erasing from their registers that which was formerly passed containing a censure upon him, and the present resolution bears honorable testimony to his patriotism and his irreproachable conduct. He intends to send you this vindication of his integrity himself. He is now ready to say his *nunc dimittis*.

I remain &c.

TO CHARLES ADAMS

THE HAGUE, September 15, 1795.

. . . . . .

You observe that there are many people who wish to raise a jealousy between Mr. Jay and another public character nearly connected with us.[1] It appears to me very probable that such attempts will be made, and I hope with you that they will prove abortive; but if I have one wish in my heart more forcible than any other, it is that the occasion for which you suppose the plan is laid may never happen. Whoever may be the successor of the present first magistrate will hold a situation so uncomfortable and so dangerous, that there is nothing in its possession to make it desirable. I am so far from looking on that place as an object worthy of ambition, that if my unequivocal wishes could decide the point on the supposition of the contingency, which we all deprecate, the election would be declined in the most decisive and explicit manner.

[1] John Adams.

In all ages of the world and in all countries, instability has been the most essential characteristic of popular opinions. It is so in America, and will infallibly become so more and more in proportion as the increase of population shall multiply the quantity of opinions. The revolutions of popular opinions are to be considered as things of course, though they are misfortunes to the individuals, who are the subjects of them. We are however all much alike in this respect, and the man who has never been at different periods strenuously attached to opposite opinions, would be one of the rarest phenomena in creation. . . .

October 5. . . . The treatment of Mr. Jay is certainly such as does no honor to the American name. It appears to me evident enough, that very little of the outcry of which the treaty is made the pretence is meant to bear against that instrument. There is a combination of personal envy of the man, of factious enmity against the government, and of eternal foreign influence operating unseen, all assuming the mark of pure and exalted patriotism, to impose upon the people; that the mask should be assumed is neither new nor strange; but that it should still answer its purpose would be surprizing, if any thing could surprize. . . .[1]

[1] "The opposition to the treaty appears to be a concentered effort of anti-federal and French influence working with popular passions, upon a field unhappily too favorable. You may recollect that before the treaty was public, I more than once expressed to you a doubt as to its ratification, though the most obnoxious clause it contains, the one upon the suspension of which the ratification is conditioned, was not then known to me. The hope that we shall ever have with Great Britain a treaty such as we should be glad to have, is idle and absurd. The interests of the two nations inevitably militate too much to have such a thing practicable. I am afraid we shall find it but too easy to get into a war with them." *To Sylvanus Bourne*, October 10, 1795, MS.

Four days later (October 14) he received instructions from the Department of State to go to London. On the 19th he presented his brother and Secretary, Thomas Boylston Adams, to the Dutch officials as *chargé des affaires* in his absence, and prepared for his own journey.

TO DANIEL SARGENT[1]

THE HAGUE, October 12, 1795.

. . . . . .

The people of the United States have in their own possession the choice between peace, with unparalleled prosperity, and war, with universal calamity. It gives me pain to see that there are so many who can be induced to hesitate for such a length of time in making a choice. A war indeed at present with Great Britain must be total destruction to the commerce of our country; for there is no maritime power on earth that can contend with the existing naval British force. This fact is so fully ascertained, that for these three or four months the French and Dutch fleets have been obliged to shelter themselves in their respective ports, and in every part of the European ocean their enemy has held undisputed possession. How far an American *merchant* under these circumstances can be prepared for war, or willing to support measures that must lead to it, I cannot readily conjecture.

It is far from my wish that the proceedings of the British government towards the United States and their citizens should be forgotten. If *resentment* were a good or a safe foundation for political measures, few Americans perhaps would be disposed to go further than I should. But of all the guides that a nation can follow, passion is the most treacherous, and prudence the most faithful. If our countrymen can be sufficiently impressed with this truth, I believe no great length of time will pass, before they will see our national injuries avenged, with a severity which will gratify the most inveterate enmity. . . .

[1] Of Boston, born in 1731, and died in 1806.

TO W. & J. WILLINK AND N. & J. VAN STAPHORST & HUBBARD

THE HAGUE, October 16, 1795.

GENTLEMEN:

In reply to your favor of yesterday you will permit me to waive any further discussion relative to the bill of Dallard and Swan. But while you have the security not only of the Treasury order upon them, but also the bill of Lubbert and Dumas, with yet another in case of urgent necessity, I do not consider the payment as in the smallest degree precarious.

Upon what grounds Messrs. John and Francis Baring & Co.[1] assured Mr. Hubbard, that the Treasury did not expect the funds sent for you would produce more than ninety per cent, and that such sales would be satisfactory, I know not. Such an assurance is certainly not inferable from any directions that either you or I have received from the Treasury Department. It is so far from being satisfactory to me under the instructions which I have received, that I should now request you in the most earnest manner to give immediate orders for the suspension of the sales upon such terms, but for the information in your last letter. The loss to the United States on these sales will be such as in my opinion can be warranted only by a conviction, founded upon substantial reasons, that it would not be disapproved by the Secretary of the Treasury.

As the three hundred thousand florins, lately remitted you from the Treasury Department, were destined and appropriated among other purposes for the payment of the Antwerp interest, I believe that the part of the sum

[1] Francis Baring (1740–1810) was the founder of the financial house of Barings.

necessary for that operation cannot be applied to any other purpose whatever.

You observe, that "the doctrine laid down by me relative to the payment you made of the last Antwerp interest established the propriety and justice of a debt first due having an undeniable right to be discharged prior to one falling due at a later period."

This reference to a former occasion, upon which I had with regret an opinion different from yours, makes it necessary for me to observe that your present statement draws from what I then said an inference more extensive and general than I think the expressions will support. I contended that the government of the United States had the right to direct the application of any balance in the hands of their agents to such payments as they thought proper, that the agents had no authority to divert a special appropriation to the discharge of any other demand, and that if it should happen that a double appropriation were made of the same sum, it would then be incumbent on the agents to make payments *according to their orders* as they should be *demanded*, so long as their money lasted.

To this opinion I still adhere; but I think it does not by any means involve any conclusion relative to the respective merits of a prior or a subsequent claim to the payment of a debt in general.

I could not intend to advance an unqualified position that a debt first due has an undeniable right to be first paid, because I never had an idea that the principle, thus unlimited, had any foundation. There are a variety of circumstances, which *may* give a superior claim to the payment the most recently due.

Of this matter I consider the demand for the payment of interest at its stipulated periods. Punctuality on this article

is in general a more imperious duty of the debtor, because it is more essential to the convenience, and perhaps to the necessities, of the creditor.

Your opinion in this respect appears to be the same; as, although you have not paid the instalment of principal which became payable last June, you have paid considerable sums of interest, which have since that time become due.

When therefore the government of the United States have made a particular remittance, with orders to you that it should be applied to the payment of certain interest, I do not think you have any authority to refuse making that application, and to employ the money for the payment of an instalment of principal, previously payable, and for the discharge of which other ample funds were provided, though unfortunately they were in stocks.

I must now request, gentlemen, your final and positive answer, whether you will supply Mr. De Wolf the sums necessary for the punctual payment of the interest upon the Antwerp loan payable in December.

Whatever your decision may be, it will doubtless be such as you will justify to the government of the United States.

I am under an inevitable necessity of answering the call which Mr. De Wolf has made on me, but shall yet suspend my answer until I receive yours. I am unwilling to write him that you chuse to make an application variant from your orders, of remittances lately made and destined for him. I am still more unwilling to give him the means of procuring the supply elsewhere, in a manner that will be burdensome to the United States; and, indeed, I cannot recur to other resources, without being first convinced that the supplies in your hands will fail. But the first of December is rapidly approaching, some provision for the payment of that day must be made, and as far as the means in my power extend,

I am bound to use them all, if necessary to ensure a punctual discharge of interest. . . .[1]

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

HELVOETSLUYS,[2] October 31, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The service indeed upon which I am now ordered has nothing to please in prospect. To deal with a British Minister, to deal with him after Mr. Jay, and with the furious persecution that this gentleman has suffered for this very transaction, fresh before my eyes and yet rumbling in my ears, has nothing attractive to ambition or flattering to hope. On one side the perspective is illiberal and captious negotiation, and probable failure, or such a success as will not be much better; on the other is virulent reproach and abuse to extend as usual to my nearest friends, and lavished more on them than on me. That both these things will be combined for my endurance in the course of the business is

[1] He left the Hague October 21, reached Rotterdam the same day, and on the 22d went to Helvoetsluys. See *Memoirs*, October, 1795. "The only remedy against moral as well as physical evil must very often be patience. At the obstinacy of the winds, which continued all this day, I have fretted *not more than usual*. I have, indeed, taken to myself some little consolation of vanity, from the idea that I have borne the vexation with philosophy more than common *to me;* and since I find that all the anxiety with which my eyes have involuntarily turned with constant iteration to all the vanes and weathercocks in sight has been merely gratuitous; that the kindness of a weathercock would have given me no relief, and that all the stores of Lapland magic would have been useless in my hands, I have been rather fortified than weakened in my resignation, and have only pitied those who can prevail upon themselves to practise impositions without necessity." *To Thomas B. Adams*, October 27, 1795. Ms.

[2] "Put up at Bridge's, an English house, and tolerably good." Ms. *Diary*. But see the *Memoirs*, October 28, 1795.

highly probable. One or the other of them is inevitable, for the existence of the first in its utmost extent will be the only possible protection against the certainty of the second.

These anticipations do not, however, in themselves form my principal concern. I know that success is seldom at human disposal, and that censure, if unmerited, is an evil not intolerable. It is not therefore the *responsibility* of this agency that I dread, but it is *the magnitude of the trust, and my own incompetency;* the first being only my personal concern, but the last involving the most important interests, and the welfare of my country.

It is possible that the result of my present mission may ascertain the termination of my residence in Europe, independent of any act of my own will, or perhaps it will serve to give a direction to it. Your recommendation to me to return to America at the close of a three years' absence, unless removed to a different scene and raised to an higher trust, will have, as all advice from you will always have, great weight in my mind. But I must assure you in the most unequivocal manner that I have not the shadow of a wish for a more elevated rank than that in which I am now placed, and that, of the only two American missions in Europe where the higher character is employed, I consider the English as an object of aversion and the French of indifference.

As there is no present prospect of vacancy in either of those places, it will be unnecessary for me to give you the numerous reasons upon which my sentiments concerning them are formed. A dislike both of the government and national character, perhaps amounting even to a prejudice, is the principal ground of the first, and the unsettled revolutionary state of the country is at least a counterbalance to any predilection I might otherwise entertain in favor of the other.

Besides these considerations, if I had not collected a sufficient portion of the "Stoic spirit" to dull the edge of my ambition, if the vanity of rank or the parade of representation had in my eyes such charms as could overpower my philosophy, I should at least teach my desires a subordination to the sentiments of justice, at least command them to compare the merits of their claims with those of others and be silent. If diplomatic promotion in this course of duty be an advantage or a reward, and the occasion should occur for bestowing it, the United States, besides all their deserving citizens at home, have other servants in Europe in the same station with me, older in years, more versed in public affairs, entitled by long and faithful service to the notice of public recompense, and without a delirium of extravagance could I expect advancement while they remain stationary? Without an arrogance of equal injustice and absurdity could I wish it?

The situation at The Hague, therefore, insignificant as it is, satisfies me with an employment which, without being tedious or painful, is adequate to my talents, and leaves me leisure to pursue any course of studies that may be recommended by its amusement or utility. Indeed, Sir, it is a situation in itself much preferable to that of eternal expectation in a lawyer's office for business which, when it comes, is scarcely sufficient to give bread, and procures one more curses than thanks. I may be reduced once more to the necessity of going through that trial, but as long as any other honest resource is left me, the remembrance of that probation will suffice me, and I shall not be willing to go through it again. . . .

TO CHARLES ADAMS

HELVOETSLUYS, November 4, 1795.

. . . . . .

The state of this country is in general tolerably quiet and peaceable, excepting every now and then a little irregular usurpation of sovereignty by clubs and popular assemblages; hitherto they have not been followed by any tragical event. The dissolution of the confederation, and the consolidation of all the provinces into a single republic, by the convocation of a National Assembly, has been for many months an object of great solicitude, more especially because a difference of opinion has arisen in the different provinces, upon the propriety of the proposed alteration. The province of Holland almost unanimously, and the popular societies and clubs in all the others, have pursued very tenaciously the point upon which they think the permanency of their revolution will turn; but the majority of the people in most of the smaller provinces, are strenuously averse to the change, and adhere tenaciously to their federal system. The parties have at length proceeded so far, that the provincial assembly of Holland has taken a formal resolution, that in case the other provinces do not unanimously agree to call the National Assembly by the 25th of this month, this province will take the step alone, or together with those that will agree to join it, without waiting any longer for the assent of the remaining members.

I have been amused but not surprized, to observe with what zeal the most ardent patriots here connect in argument, *provincial sovereignty* and *aristocracy*, after having seen so many patriots no less ardent in America, labouring with the same industry, to make the essence of *Republicanism* consist in *State Sovereignty*. I knew before this that the

arguments of a party are generally urged more for their operation than for their weight. . . .

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING[1]

LONDON, November 15, 1795.

(Private.)

SIR:

I have to thank you for your favor of September 10, which Mr. Deas delivered to me on my arrival here. The letter of Mr. Randolph, dated July 21,[2] had indeed been to me a subject of equal pain and surprise. Combined with the numerous accounts of irregular popular proceedings in different parts of the United States, and with a prejudice discoverable in the minds of almost all the Americans I met who had recently come from the United States, it induced an unpleasant anticipation of the consequences that awaited the United States from the designs of some, and the unguarded hastiness of others, among their citizens.

It gives me pleasure to observe from your letter, that the proceedings of the popular meetings on the subject of the

[1] Adams landed at Margate November 10, and reached London the next day, only to find that the exchange of ratifications of the treaty had been performed by William Allen Deas. It remained for him to await further instructions from the State Department upon the twelfth article of the treaty and upon certain points not dealt with in that document. These instructions, sketched by Randolph, were suppressed by Pickering, his successor in office, as having been formed "under the impression of ideas quite foreign to an immediate ratification of that treaty." The subject was not resumed until too late for Adams to be the agent.

[2] Printed in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 719. "The complexion of his whole letter shows that these popular meetings were not displeasing to him; and combined with various facts, which I cannot now detail, indicating studied delays, to give him for extending the opposition, satisfies me that his true-object was to defeat the treaty altogether." *Pickering to Adams*, September 10, 1795. Ms.

treaty are in every respect less important, than from many circumstances I had been apprehensive. That the hasty rashness of the meetings was the result of a concerted plan, and that every artifice had been employed to take the people by surprise, and to use them as instruments for a purpose, the success of which would eventually prove their irreparable misfortune, I can readily believe, as I had long suspected that such would be the case before it happened; but that the Secretary of State should be accessary to such a manœuvre is what I could not have believed from any opinion less respectable than yours, and of which I would still fain hope he was innocent.

The occasion of his resignation you have mentioned, however, as originating in a different source. But notwithstanding the force of your expression, that he had forfeited the confidence of the President, the story which is not much of a secret here must be loaded with great exaggerations, if not with absolute falsehood.

The intelligence of the pacifications with the Indian tribes and of the general prosperity enjoyed throughout the United States, while it accounts in some measure for the violence and the arts used to defeat the system to which the peace and prosperity can alone be attributed, is, I would hope, a sure token that all the endeavors to delude the people into a sacrifice of their own welfare will prove as unsuccessful as they have hitherto been.

The system of policy pursued by the President since the commencement of the present European war has been encountered by so many difficulties and embarrassments, which the wisdom of his government has removed and overcome, that I feel encouraged in the hope that it will be successfully pursued to the end. The war in all probability approaches towards its termination. Another campaign is

barely possible. More than one I cannot under the present state of affairs anticipate, and the scale of probability as it appears to me inclines towards a general peace, or at least a cessation of hostilities before the close of the year ensuing. . . .

The situation of this country one would imagine not much less critical than that of France and of the United Provinces. The scarcity of grain and flour is so considerable that it has been among the first subjects of deliberation to the Parliament now assembled, to take measures for preventing an absolute famine. Riots have recently taken place in different parts of the Kingdom owing to the price of provisions, of bread especially, and those who have been so anxiously desirous of trying the experiment of a famine abroad may perhaps witness its effects without going from home.

This circumstance has naturally given a vigor to the discontented party, and has much increased the fermentation that was before operating in silence among the lower ranks of people particularly in the capital. Numerous popular meetings have been held, and their orators have declaimed in that kind of style which produces the effect against which the laws were intended to guard, without infringing the laws themselves. On the first day of the present session of Parliament the King was personally insulted, the glass of his coach was broken by a stone, and it is the fashion here to say, that his life was aimed at.

This was probably not the case. In the *present* state of things the life of the king can be no object to the party hostile to the government. An assassination would do them great injury, and could be of no possible advantage. But to prove that he may be *insulted* with impunity is, doubtless, a point of consequence to those who found their hopes of a Revolution on the degradation of the royal character.

Whatever the fact or the intention really was, it has been the occasion of two bills introduced by the Ministers now pending, one in the House of Lords, and the other in the House of Commons. Their professed objects are the security of the King's person and the prevention of seditious meetings and assemblies; but their operation must be to abridge very materially the right of political discussion, and the public voice in the capital is strongly decided against them. In my next letter I shall give a further account of the proceedings on this subject, which becomes interesting from the uncommon degree of the public attention it has excited, and in the interval remain, with perfect respect, Sir, etc.[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, November 17, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

After a detention of twenty days at Helvoetsluys, and a pleasant passage of twenty-four hours from thence to Margate, I arrived here on the morning of the 11th instant. The state of the business on which I came will be known to you before the receipt of this letter.

An English paper that I saw at Rotterdam on the day of my departure from the Hague gave me the first information of Mr. Randolph's resignation. On my arrival here I found a story of its supposed occasion, for which I fear there is too much foundation, though I think it must have received high aggravations from those who make little scruple of divulging it. At present I can only suspend my judgment upon the degree of misconduct chargeable on him, and still hope that he was never influenced by motives more criminal than those of a misguided party spirit. I shall reserve for a

[1] See Adams, *Memoirs*, December 1, 1795; *Annual Register*, 1796, 17.

future letter some observations relative to the means of influence used by a foreign power in the United States, and confine myself in this to such observations as have occurred to me on the state of affairs in those parts of Europe the most interesting to our country.

The new French legislature assumed its functions on the 27th of last month.[1] No account of any very important transaction by them has yet reached this country. The members of the Executive directory are Larévellière-Lépeaux,[2] Letourneur,[3] Rewbell,[4] Barras [5] and Carnot.[6] The last was chosen to replace Sieyès, who was in the first appointment by a small majority and declined.

Carnot was a member of Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, and I think the only one remaining alive who has not been under arrest by order of the Convention, a fate which he very narrowly escaped not more than four months ago. He was then spared as was said on account of his military merit, as the design of the campaign which terminated in the conquest of the Netherlands is attributed to him.

[1] The elections in France under the new constitution had been held October 20. As two-thirds of the new *Corps Législatif* were to be taken from the members of the old Convention, four hundred and ninety-three members should have been thus elected. In fact, only three hundred and eighty-nine were returned, leaving one hundred and four to be chosen by the elected members from the Convention, who selected sympathizers with their own policy. This expedient retained in power a majority of the old Convention, and resulted in less than two years in the overthrow of the Republic. The five Directors were chosen from this party, and the council of the Ancients from the members of the *Corps Législatif*. For the characters and powers of the Directory, see *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 490.

[2] Louis-Marie de la Révellière-Lepaux (1753–1824).

[3] Charles-Louis-François-Honoré Letourneur (1751–1817).

[4] Jean-François Rewbell (1747–1807).

[5] Paul-François-Jean-Nicolas, vicomte de Barras (1755–1829).

[6] Lazare-Nicolas-Marguerite Carnot (1753–1823).

The fluctuation of fortunes and reputations is equally remarkable in the choice of the other members, and even in the consideration of persons who were not chosen.

Boissy d'Anglas,[1] Cambacérès,[2] Lanjuinais,[3] Henry Larivière,[4] the demi-gods of the month of June, are out of the question. The reason is that they were not forward in support of the decree of reëlection which produced the late convulsion, and the most recent services are the only ones remembered.

If the tone of the Directory can be anticipated by any consideration of the character of its members, it will not be remarkable for stability or harmony. The only man whose personal character can give him any pretensions to power, the only one whose conduct has a *system* for its basis, Sieyès, refused the seat that was offered him. It was a place he said which required that its holder should possess the *general confidence*, and no man could be more unfit for it than him, against whom all parties without exception since the beginning of the Revolution had pointed as a mark.

Did Sieyès imagine that any other man in France possessed the general confidence, or ever could possess it more than three months together? No, for independent of his experience it is not understanding or sagacity that are *his* deficiencies. Could he be serious when he represented himself as having been the special mark of all the successive factions? — he? — Sieyès? — the only man of note whom every successive faction has spared. The only man extant, who from the day when the first Constituent Assembly met to the present, has been openly or unseen concerned in the most important affairs. The man whose mere existence at

[1] François-Antoine Boissy d'Anglas (1756–1826).

[2] Jean-Joseph-Régis Cambacérès (1753–1824).

[3] Jean-Denis Lanjuinais (1753–1827).

[4] Pierre-François-Joachim-Henri de Larivière (1761–1838).

this day is a standing miracle, and amounts to proof that there are no universalities in nature, and that everything has an exception? No, no. He certainly knew better.

But he was determined to refuse, and some reason he must give. This was a very good one to profess, it contained an eulogium of himself without offending others. It had a natural tendency to increase his influence with those who believed his assertion, if any such there were; and as to those who did not believe him, it may be supposed they were very indifferent whether he spoke the truth or not.

From my arresting your attention so long and repeatedly upon the motions of this one man, I hope you will not think I give him an importance that he does not deserve. To speak my mind freely, I consider him as the main spring of the French external policy.[1] I believe, further, that his policy as respects the United States is of a tendency as pernicious to them, as if it had been invented in the councils of the Prince of Darkness.

In the present instance he avoids a station of show as he has always uniformly done; he remains in the Council of five hundred, and will be satisfied with having the great portion of executive management really in his hands. He is so much of a metaphysician that he values the substance more than the appearance of power, and he secures to himself the advantage of protection from the most imminent hazards that may attend new Revolutions.

The new Legislature did not assemble under the fairest auspices that could be wished. A civil war in the heart of Paris but a few days before stifled in blood,[2] a paper currency

[1] The Directors appointed, November 3, Charles Delacroix Minister of Foreign Affairs; but Rewbell exercised an important influence in that Department.

[2] See Monroe's despatches of October 20, and November 18, 1795, in *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 379, 415.

depreciated to the lowest extreme of sufferance, an expense of more than an hundred daily millions to support, and defeat, a word of which they had almost lost the use, attending their armies. Internal discord can scarcely be mentioned as one of their distresses, because it has become their ordinary state, and its evils have lost their horror in their frequency; but dissension with their new allies may be added to the list of the embarrassments under which they have yet the courage to retain a compulsive hold of the public helm.

. . . . . .

I remain &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

[TIMOTHY PICKERING, ACTING]

LONDON, December 5, 1795.

SIR:

I saw yesterday Lord Grenville at his office, and had a lengthy conversation with him upon subjects connected with the object of my mission here, and upon those concerning which your instructions had previously been executed by Mr. Deas.

I found Sir William Scott,[1] the Advocate General, with him. The point first discussed was that concerning the cases proposed to be settled by compromise. This matter being, however, still unsettled I shall reserve for a separate letter an account of whatever relates to it.

The Advocate General having withdrawn, the compensation to the Commissioners was mentioned, and I told his Lordship that upon further reflection I had been confirmed in the opinion that my authority from the American govern-

[1] Afterwards Lord Stowell (1745–1836).

ment would not permit me to make any discrimination in the pay of the several members of the same Commission. That wishing, however, to be candid with him, I should acknowledge that my instructions allowed me to agree to the sum of £1500 to the Commissioners for the debts and for the spoliations, and £1000 for those who are to determine the river St. Croix; and that rather than incur the delay necessary for taking the opinion of the American government, I should consent to those sums, though, at the same time, I must repeat that smaller sums would be preferred by them. He said that the principal object with him for thinking £1500 necessary was, that he might propose it to the persons whom he had in his mind to send to America, and *who would not go for less*. That if I pleased, therefore, the agreement might be as he had before proposed to me, reserving to the American government the right to change it, if they thought proper, so far as to make the pay for all the same. I said once more that I had no authority to admit for a moment the idea of discrimination, but that as the reason he had mentioned for making it appeared weighty to my own mind, if he pleased the agreement should be such that the largest sums mentioned should be allowed to all the Commissioners alike, reserving to the American government the right to reduce, if they think proper, to £1000 the pay of those Commissioners who shall be in both instances not obliged to go beyond sea for the performance of their service. To this he agreed, requesting me until the determination of the American government be known not to mention the circumstance here, because he did not wish the future Commissioners here should be led to expect so much as £1500. I told him I should certainly be silent on the subject, and mentioned the propriety of having something written upon the agreement. He said he would in the course of a few

days write me a note mentioning the agreement as it has been made in our conversation.

I then observed there was a subject concerning which I had no instructions, nor indeed any communications, from the Government of the United States, but concerning which I had reason to believe the sensations in America were so strong that I felt myself bound in duty to suggest them, as indeed I had been required to do by the agent of American claims,[1] who had received the sentiments of our government on the subject. That I understood there were several cases now pending before the Lords Commissioners of Appeals which involved in their decision certain points of national concern, upon which I should be happy to have some conversation with him, and that a decision had taken place during the course of the last summer which I believed, when made known in America, had occasioned *disappointment* and *chagrin:* that the ground upon which I had understood the condemnation had taken place, was the transient residence of one of the parties in the island of Guadeloupe; that there were indeed other incidental points, which I had been, however, informed had been given up or not insisted on upon the appeal, but that on the facts of the case as they were known to the American government, there was no legal principle upon which they conceived that property liable to condemnation; that upon the occasion of the trial of that case, one point had arisen, upon which, if I was rightly informed, one of the Lords Commissioners had observed that some understanding between the two countries might be advisable, and that my own wish to prevent the irritation that must be occasioned by decisions so unfavorable to the inter-

[1] Samuel Bayard (1767–1840) was, on the suggestion of Jay, sent to England in 1794 to represent the claims of American citizens before the prize courts in that country. His reports are in the Department of State.

ests, and so adverse to the opinions of my country, induced me to desire every possible occasion to discuss the points upon which a difference of opinion between the two nations might subsist. He said that he would cheerfully enter upon any such discussion; that the government of this country never interfered in judicial proceedings to influence the decisions; but that there might be agreements upon such or such principle of the laws of nations, which agreements would be considered as rules to guide the decrees.

Several of these points upon which interesting questions now depend were mentioned, but not much dwelt upon. I thought it sufficient at this time to introduce the subject, which may be a very extensive one, and which is totally disconnected with any instructions that I have hitherto received.

I then came to points upon which I had been honored with your orders and said that the instructions of the American government relative to the further matters which I should submit to his consideration, having been executed already by Mr. Deas, it was perhaps less necessary for me to enter largely upon the business than it might otherwise have been; but that as these concerns had now devolved upon me, I thought it essential to the discharge of my duty to notice what had been specially recommended to my attention. That the President of the United States had been informed of numerous captures having been made, during the course of the last summer, of American vessels laden with provisions, in consequence of an order said to have been issued under his Majesty's authority, and I was directed to inquire into the existence of such an order. He said that he would direct Mr. Hammond in the course of a very few days to send me a copy of that order; that a copy of it had been sent, to be communicated to the American government in

America with suitable explanations, but that the *manner* in which Mr. Deas had thought proper to execute his instructions was such that he (Lord Grenville) chose to have no communication with him on the subject. He then added that the treaty admitted by implication that there are cases in which provisions and other articles not generally contraband may become so, and stipulated that until the two countries should agree on this subject their respective conduct towards each other shall be regulated by the existing law of nations; that he believed there was not a single writer upon the law of nations who did not lay down the principle that provisions may become contraband, and that the known passage of Vattel, a modern and judicious writer, who upon the subject of national law had taken the indulgent side, and might be considered as a *protestant* of political doctrines, expressly stated that provisions may be liable to capture with indemnity, when the distress of the enemy is such for want of them that it becomes a mean of reducing them, or of procuring an advantageous peace; that, besides, it is equally clear that vessels may be detained upon *suspicion* of their having on board property belonging to the enemy of the captor, by the treaty and by the existing law of nations. Now, the order only directs a capture when *both* the circumstances concur; that is, when the vessels are laden with provisions, and when there is any suspicion of enemy's property. It does not, therefore, go to the extent that it might without any violation of right.[1]

"With respect to the treaty (said I) my instructions expressly command me to say that its ratification must not be construed into an admission of the legality of this order. As to the principle stated by your Lordship as being laid down by Vattel, it could not be applicable in the present case, even

[1] On provisions as contraband, see Moore, *Digest of International Law*, VII. 675.

if admitted, unless there were also an admission of *fact*. That is, that his Majesty's enemies *were* so distressed for want of provisions, that they were susceptible of being reduced by the capture of neutral vessels carrying provisions to them. This point I do not wish to discuss with you. As to the *suspicion* of having enemy's property on board, even supposing that could justify *detention*, it could justify nothing more, and in this case there is much more. There is taking property from its owners against their will, and giving them a supposed indemnity equally without their will." "But," said he, "it is customary in the Courts of Admiralty, whenever articles perishable in their nature must be endangered by the detention necessary until the determination of the cause for which they were taken, to sell the articles under a decree of the Court, and pay the proceeds to the party." "Even that," said I, "differs essentially from taking a man's property, and paying him according to your own estimation. A *sale* is attended with competition, and, where an article is in demand, will produce a price." "I believe," said he, "it is very well understood that the payments for the provisions that have been brought in were more advantageous to the merchants than a sale would have been." I thought it unnecessary to urge this point any further. The answer to the last observation is very obvious, but it had run wide from the position of a right to detain on suspicion, or any consequences deducible from it.

As the principle of this order (I resumed) is not admitted by the American government, considerations of its peculiar inconvenience to the United States and their citizens form but a secondary ground of objection. Provisions are among the most valuable articles of our export trade. They are indeed more valuable, proportionally speaking, to us than to any other commercial nation; a restraint therefore upon the free-

dom of this trade by external power has a more extensive operation upon our interests than upon those of any others, and it has the appearance of being specially pointed against us. For however general the expressions in which the order is couched may be, as comprehending all neutral nations, yet if, in the nature of things it can operate only against one, it must be understood to have had an application only to that nation. Besides this, if my information be accurate, the same rate of indemnity has in the cases of the late captures been allowed to the neutral proprietors of all the several nations. Now the same per centum upon a cargo coming from Hamburg might afford a very handsome profit, and coming from Philadelphia would give scarce any at all; as in estimating the rate of *profits* upon any given capital, the *time* during which it is employed forms an essential ingredient. A vessel from Hamburg to France might perform ten or a dozen voyages to and fro in the course of a year. From America the average could not amount to more than two. The same rule, therefore, produces very different effects upon circumstances which nature has made so different. These observations are made not as admitting that any indemnity whatever could obtain our assent to the legality of captures, but in order to show the character of the order itself, by the partial and unequal effects that it necessarily produces.

He said that it would be shown by the accounts of the sums paid or to be paid by this government for these provisions, that the American vessels brought in amounted to quite a small proportion of the whole; that the order had in fact operated much more upon the nations up the Baltic than upon the United States, and that it was really intended that it should; that he would direct that the amount of the accounts should be shown me; and as to the rates of in-

demnity, he appeared in some measures to admit the reason of the observation I had made, but said that it was qualified by the circumstance of the great difference in the freights.

The next particular of your instructions to which I adverted, was the stipulation in the second article of the treaty, for the delivery of the posts, and the previous measures provided to be taken to effect the evacuation. I told him I was ordered to urge for the immediate performance of that engagement. He said that the orders had been made for the purpose, *and he believed they had been sent out.* "But," said he, "it cannot be surprising if, upon seeing in what manner the treaty has been received in America, and the opposition which it has met and still meets there, we should think it necessary to be upon our guard. If, upon the meeting of Congress, a difficulty should be raised and prevail against passing the laws which may be necessary to give effect to certain articles of the treaty, it cannot be expected that we should be willing to perform on our side without performance on the other." I then replied that I could not undertake to say before hand what the Congress of the United States in any instance would think proper to do. But I had not the smallest doubt, and I believed this government had no reason to doubt, but that the United States would faithfully perform all their engagements. That with respect to the opposition advanced against the treaty, its appearance I had reason to believe from good authority, was more formidable than its reality; that it was the nature of opposition to any public measure in that country to be bold, open, public, industrious, and active; that it was even more so there than elsewhere, and arose from the principle of liberty, upon which the government was founded; that, upon an occasion of such universal interest as that treaty, opposition was very natural, and its ordinary character

might derive from the importance of the subject an unusual degree of apparent energy, and it would show itself in its utmost extent, which was further magnified by a view of it at this distance. He said he could readily believe it, and that the force of the observation upon the character of opposition would be understood and acknowledged with peculiar conviction by Englishmen.

I then added, "I am thoroughly convinced that the engagements of the American government will be punctually discharged, and I hope most sincerely that if on *either* side of the water there are persons really desirous to revive the causes of former differences, or to generate occasions for new ones, persons who wish to accumulate irritations, which the interest of both nations would entirely remove, and to instigate a failure on their own side as a provocation to the other, their views may be entirely frustrated." He then repeated that "*he believed* the orders for the evacuation of the posts had been sent out."

After saying thus much upon the matters relating to the treaty, I observed that there were two new aggressions, on the part of officers in his Majesty's service, which it was my duty to recall to his lordship's recollection. A memorial on the subject had been presented by Mr. Deas, and he had sent the documents by which the facts were substantiated. It remained only for me to repeat the demand of reparation for what was considered by the American government as an outrageous violation of their territorial jurisdiction, and as being highly aggravated by an attack upon a foreign minister entitled to all the protection which the laws of nations could give to such a character. That the instance was indeed of such a complexion that the President had thought proper to revoke the exequatur of Mr. Moore, his Majesty's Vice Consul at Rhode Island, who appeared

to have cooperated in the offense to such a degree as made it proper for the American government to do itself justice as far as concerned him.[1]

He said that immediately upon receiving information of the charge against Captain Home, an order had been issued by the Lords of Admiralty to him for the purpose of hearing what he should have to say in his justification; that he could assure me no officer in his Majesty's service would ever be countenanced in such acts as the violation of a friendly nation's territorial rights, aggravated by an injury to the privileged character of a foreign minister. He mentioned this the rather, because, although no representations on the affair had yet been received from Captain Home himself, he had reason to suppose, from other statements which he had seen, that the violation of territory would be denied by the captain, who would maintain that the transaction took place at such a distance from the American coast as took it altogether out of the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. I told him that the determination of this government, or the evidence upon which they might found it, was not a subject for my consideration. I should only remark, from a personal knowledge of the place where the event occurred, and of the points from and to which the packet was going, that the pretence that the fact happened upon the high seas out of our jurisdiction, if raised, would, in my opinion, be disproved by the simple local relation of the places.

"With respect to the case of Mr. Moore (said Lord Grenville) that is a little different. An express stipulation of the treaty gives each of the two governments the right of dismissing the consuls of the other for such reasons as itself

[1] This refers to the search of the *Peggy* by boats from the British ship of war *Africa*, for the departing French minister Fauchet and his papers.

thinks proper. Whether the reason be good or bad, it is the mere exercise of a right reserved, upon which the other government has nothing to say. So that the President, if he pleased, might dismiss a man *because he took a dislike to his face*, and we should have no right to object against it. I have, therefore, taken his Majesty's pleasure for appointing a person in the place of Mr. Moore, and it is a matter upon which no question can arise. But if, to go any further, my opinion is asked in this case, I can have no hesitation in saying that I think Mr. Moore has been *a little hastily* dealt with. That the mere circumstance of his sending a letter from Captain Home to the Governor of Rhode Island[1] did not merit such pointed severity. For, however offensive the letter might be, he sent it at the express requisition of Captain Home, which he could not refuse, Captain Home being in his Majesty's service an officer so vastly superior in rank to himself." "My orders were," said I, "to explain the reasons upon which this act of the President was grounded, and to observe that it was not only because Mr. Moore sent the insulting letter to the Governor of Rhode Island, but because his presence on board the *Africa*, at the time when the other outrage was committed, gave strong ground for suspicion that he was accessary to that. These reasons were deemed sufficient by the President. He trusts they will be so by this government; and you may be assured that no trivial cause, nor any such reason as the President's *taking a dislike to a man's face*, would induce him to the removal of any one." "No, no, (said he) I was not speaking officially, and only meant, in giving you my opinion, to put an extreme case to show my idea of the principle."

Respecting the other case, the same orders have been issued from the Admiralty, to the captain of the *Hermione*,

[1] Arthur Fenner (1745–1805).

in order to know what he can say for his justification. "I am directed on this occasion," said I, "to urge that more pointed orders may be given, to prevent the repetition of this evil. It is a great evil, and is continually recurring. I may add that it is of a nature extremely calculated to produce irritation and resentment. It couples insult with injury in a manner which naturally makes not only the sufferers, but numbers of their fellow citizens, think it intolerable. The government of the United States, for these reasons, wish that some equitable agreement on the subject may put an end to complaints to which they cannot be inattentive."

He said they were very willing to make such an agreement as might result from a fair and candid discussion of the subject. That he had already had, when Mr. Jay was here, much conversation with him upon it, and that it was then understood to be one of the points reserved for future consideration. The question involved in it was on both sides difficult. For instance, if a sailor belonging to one of the king's ships stationed on the American coast, should desert and run away from his ship, it could not be supposed that he thereby changed his allegiance or acquired a right to the protection of the United States as an American citizen. On the other hand, all those who, before the war, were inhabitants of America, and had continued to be so, wherever born, were doubtless to be considered as American citizens and entitled to protection. That between these two extreme points there was a great variety of gradations, and it must be a delicate thing on both sides to fix the line of demarcation; that in the particular instance of the settlers, etc., within the posts to be evacuated, the treaty had ascertained the proceedings whereby every individual might make and declare his election, and he should cheerfully

attend to any observations that might occur to me on the view of the subject as a general question.

Before I proceed to a few remarks which I shall take the liberty to submit, suggested by this conversation, I have to notice a proposal of Lord Grenville's respecting the two important Commissions, and which escaped my recollection, when I gave in the beginning of this letter an account of the agreement as to the pay of the Commissioners. He said that the treaty stipulated nothing as to the appointment of the secretaries to these Commissions. He supposed it would not be thought necessary to have more than one secretary for each of them, and it would be perhaps eligible that the person should not be obliged to go beyond sea. His offer therefore was that the Secretary of the Commission to sit at Philadelphia [be appointed] by the American government, at the same time reserving to the Commissioners in both instances the right of objecting to the appointment of any person who might be not agreeable to them. I answered that having no communication from the government of the United States on this head, I could not say what their opinions would be; whether this arrangement would meet their ideas or whether they would prefer having the secretaries appointed as of course by the Commissioners themselves, but that I would transmit the suggestion he now made for their consideration.

In the relation that is now before you, Sir, it has been endeavored to give you the substance of everything that was said on either side, and a verbal accuracy has been preserved as far as it could be retained in memory.

The proposal for discriminating between the Commissioners in the article of compensation left me only the alternative of consenting to the highest sums or creating a further delay of four or five months. It was doubtless made

with that intention, and affords a specimen of the style of negotiation which it may be expected will be pursued. That *delay*, at least as to the performance of their engagements, is a real object which this government have in view, may be collected from various concurring circumstances. As to the evacuation of the posts, it will be observed that the intention of making that depend upon what shall be done be Congress at their meeting respecting the treaty was clearly avowed, and although a *belief* was professed that the orders were already sent out, yet it is evident from the whole that was said on that head, taken together, either that no such orders have been sent, or that they are made conditional, to be executed or not according to circumstances. This *belief* of the principal Secretary of State, upon such a point as the present, is itself a ground of suspicion that his *creed* is not in this respect entirely conformable to his knowledge. Mr. Deas was at first expressly told that the orders were sent out. I was told the same thing by Mr. Hammond the first time of my seeing him here; and now my Lord Grenville only *believes* them gone.

The *attempt* at argument in support of the order for taking vessels laden with provisions will be appreciated by the President at its proper value. It was such as made it unnecessary to contest the principles; a mere denial of their application sufficed. The indifference and readiness with which *such* reasons are advanced may serve to show the degree of stress which is laid upon the *reason* of their conduct, and what proportion it bears to their conviction that it must in truth rest upon their *sense of power*. This order has been revoked, and will not be revived so long as the costs of their captures will evidently amount higher than their value to the captors. This circumstance supplied the principal or only motive for its removal; and when it shall no

longer exist, the expectation that any consideration of justice, humanity, or neutral rights will prevent its revival for so much as an hour, would be as little warranted by present probability as by past experience.

In the case of Captain Home's violence and outrage, it seems that a pretence for bearing him out is assumed already, before any species of defence has been received from himself; and as to that of Mr. Moore, the words underscored in the above relation were expressly used. The disposition of mind which they discover shall remain without comment from me, and I shall only permit myself to add, that by repeating distinctly some of those words, it was meant to show that they had not passed unnoticed, and that by saying no further, sensations were suppressed which, if indulged, would have retorted scorn for scorn.

That Mr. Moore had thought himself *bound in duty* to send to the Governor of Rhode Island copy of a letter he had received, insolent and insulting to the Governor, *because the writer of the letter had requested him so to do*, had indeed been advanced by Mr. Moore himself; but the reason assigned by Lord Grenville, as proving that such *was* his duty, belongs entirely to him. It is that Captain Home was superior in rank to the Vice Consul: a reason to justify vicarious insolence, which, however, consonant to the practice of this country, will be considered as more than disputable in the United States.

In this conversation it will perhaps appear that the objection against Mr. Deas for the *manner* in which he has expressed the sentiments of the American government did not come with much weight from a person using such language on his side. Mr. Deas is doubtless equal to his own justification, and if the language of his memorial was warm, it was such as the occasion naturally suggested.

With respect to the pressing of seamen, it will be observed in the newspapers that notice issued yesterday from the Admiralty office, that directions have been given not to press any more men regularly protected. Whether these directions will meet with proper execution, time alone will unfold.

I am in hopes of Mr. Pinckney's return within a few days; by Christmas at latest. I expect it with anxiety, being ardently desirous to resign into his hands a task to which I must take the liberty of observing that I am altogether inadequate; and a trust the extensive importance of which could not be fully perceived at the time when my orders to repair hither were transmitted. From the foregoing account an opinion may be formed how far the relative situation of the United States and this country is still critical; and it would not become me to suggest what measures the interests and the security of the former may render advisable. That the disposition here is candid, harmonious, or sincere may be believed, if the amplest professions are to be admitted for substantial proof.

I have the honor &c.

TO LORD GRENVILLE

LONDON, December 9, 1795.

MY LORD:

I have received the card which your Lordship did me the honor to write me yesterday; but observing that it is directed to me as Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America, I think it necessary to inform your Lordship, that I am not honored with that character, and that the credential letter, which I have the honor to bear from the President of the United States to his Majesty, styles me

Minister Resident of the United States of America, at the Hague.

If this circumstance, according to the customary usages of this court, be such as to preclude me from the honor of an audience to deliver my credential letter to his Majesty, I must request of your Lordship that it may be notified to me, as I cannot by any acquiescence or assent on my part admit that I am vested with the character of a Minister Plenipotentiary.[1]

I have the honor &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

[TIMOTHY PICKERING]

LONDON, December 15, 1795.

SIR:

. . . . . .

I now resume the subject of the intention that the Ministry perhaps entertained of considering me as a Minister to this court. And several circumstances that occurred both before and after the levee convinced me that such an intention still existed.[2] The next day a paragraph appeared in one of the ministerial papers, stating that Mr. Adams, the *new envoy* from the United States of America, had delivered his credentials, etc.

I had reason to expect that a similar paragraph would appear in the next *Gazette*, and though I could not be re-

[1] See Adams, *Memoirs*, December 9, 1795. "When I first saw Mr. Adams (understanding that he was empowered to negotiate with this country during Mr. Pinckney's absence) I offered him any assistance which I could give; but, to my great surprise, he told me that he was here merely as a private individual. A day or two afterwards, Lord Grenville gave me very different information." *Gouverneur Morris to Washington*, December 19, 1795.

[2] See Adams, *Memoirs*, December 11, 1795.

sponsible for their acts or pretensions, I did not mean they should ever have a pretence to make a point of the thing on the ground of a misapprehension. I went therefore to Mr. Hammond, and clearly stated to him, that I am not to be considered as a Minister of the United States to this court, observing that from the first moment of my arrival to the present I had expressed myself in the most explicit manner on this point, both to Lord Grenville and to himself. The paragraph has, of course, not yet appeared in the *Gazette*. It had, however, already been sent for insertion, stating that I had delivered credentials as Minister Resident of the United States. Mr. Hammond, on my conversing with him, endeavored to frame the paragraph in a different manner so as to meet my ideas; but I did not think proper to take on me any responsibility whatever by approbation of a thing over which I have no control. I told him that I was answerable for my conduct as it concerns my own country; but could not be so for any insertion in the *Gazettes* made by authority of this government.

In consequence of this discussion, Mr. Hammond found it necessary, or thought proper at length, to say that, "to be sure my credential letter was *completely informal*." To this I made no answer, but his idea of its informality I take to arise from their maxim that the King of Great Britain will not admit a foreigner in the character of a Minister *to* another government than his own. To the accuracy of this principle, I must confess, I see no reasonable objection, and on that account I had not on my arrival any idea of a formal audience. When it was intimated to me by Lord Grenville that this would be necessary in point of form, I acquiesced, because I conceived that on the article of forms here it was not my business to contend with them, and if they chose to overleap or evade the *principle* above mentioned, it was at their

own peril, and not a concern of mine. The principle that *if* a Prince *does* admit a foreign Minister, it can *only* be in the character attributed to him in his credentials, was a full security to us, as I concluded, against any inference of substance that they might wish to draw from a mere ceremonial parade.

It has, therefore, now become certain that, by *their* customary forms, my audience was not only unnecessary but inadmissible. Mr. Hammond suggested to me that the objection had not been made because it had escaped their notice, and observed that in the multiplicity of their business it was impossible they should attend to everything. The observation may be true; but can the *oversight* be credited after my notice given to Lord Grenville that I had no commission to this court, and after the very explicit declaration contained in my letter to him, the copy of which is inclosed.

It seems much more probable that it was an express design of Mr. Hammond himself by means of this audience to *construe* me into a Minister to this court. And this design appears to have been so important in his mind, that to effect its execution he did not hesitate to return me in Lord Grenville's name *such* an answer as that, the copy of which is inclosed.

Negotiation in the system of these people seems to consist only in the art of reducing to a dilemma. One instance has been given in a former letter. In the present case, I was placed, not unskilfully, in that of declining a customary form. I chose to deliver my letter, taking care to show them distinctly that I meant to keep the form separate from any false inference they might choose to draw from it.

But although I have endeavored with all the caution of which I was capable to avoid a snare, if it was laid, I am not yet without concern lest some use may be designed to be

made of my conduct, of which I am not aware. Time alone can discover what Mr. Hammond's motive could be for such a manœuvre as this. That he had a motive, and a strong one, cannot well be doubted, for such a practice could not be recommended by the mere pleasure of employing it.

After reflecting in the most serious manner upon it, I can only conjecture that the object is to procure a certain pretext upon a future occasion. I trust, however, that if it should be attempted to be raised, it will be found necessary to abandon it; and, indeed, had not my opinion been such, I should have peremptorily refused to deliver my credential letter, even at the risk of what was brought so pointedly before me. Whether my conjecture be well founded or not, a short time will, I hope, ascertain, and the result will of course be made known to you.

I have the honor &c.

TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

LONDON, December 16, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

The President has not resigned, but there appears to be a most violent attack carried on against him, the object of which is probably to induce his resignation, or his removal at the next election. In this country the same people who derived so much pleasure from the Western Insurrection of the last year, take an equal satisfaction in this circumstance. They seem to anticipate with delight the fall of a man, who has hitherto been the boast of Republicans. Time will show, whether in this instance, as in the former, these exulters have not purchased the skin before the chase was killed.

But Mr. Randolph *has* resigned, and as to the origin of his resignation there are, as usual, two stories. His friends

say that it was *only* certain indiscreet communications between him and the French Minister Fauchet,[1] and they very much blame the President for having made an *éclat* of a thing, which they think ought to have been overlooked or arranged without noise.

They further threaten very hard, that Mr. Randolph, to vindicate himself, will divulge some dreadful secrets as to the English party among us, and if there be such secrets I hope he will. It is time that the people of America should know who are their true friends, and who only the tools of foreign powers.

The matter is yet unsettled, but is in every respect a thing to be regretted. But it gives great pleasure to our (not friends) in England. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

[Timothy Pickering]

London, December 19, 1795.

Sir:

I return to the conversation of which it was my purpose to give you the relation.[2] The first point started was that of alienage, residence, and domicility, which recurs in various forms in many of the cases now in the courts. Lord Grenville said that a statement was preparing taking up the subject in all its different points of view, which might lead to a settlement of the principles on which an agreement may be made, in which case a retrospective operation may be given to it so far as will be practicable, to guide the decisions in the causes now pending that involve the question; and he said

[1] Jean-Antoine-Joseph Fauchet (1761–1834).

[2] Adams had met Lord Grenville on the 16th.

he would send me this statement in the course of a few days for consideration.

The questions relative to the trade in American vessels with the French West India Islands, and from them to France and to other parts of Europe, were then noticed. He said that the Lords of Appeal had been and were still sincerely desirous to avoid the necessity of establishing any *new* principles of decision that might bear the appearance of harshness towards neutral trade; but had uniformly endeavored to govern their decrees conformably to rules practised upon in the course of former wars. That a trade opened by an enemy in favor of neutral navigation, *flagrante bello*, and contrary to the permanent system pursued by that enemy in time of peace, had, therefore, been viewed as inadmissible; as a mere evasion for the purpose of giving protection to hostile property, and so far as the principle of former decisions on this head would apply to the present cases, the Lords Commissioners would probably be governed by them. He then mentioned the case of the Dutch ships that occurred in the year 1758, and said he had a report concerning them made by persons of the highest judicial authority in this country, namely the late Lord Mansfield, Sir Dudley Ryder and Doctor Charles Hay.[1]

I observed that not having seen that report, I had not an opportunity to remark upon the doctrines it might contain; but with respect to the case of the Dutch ships, admitting in the first place that it was parallel to that of our trade on the present occasion, the Americans might inquire, whether that nation were satisfied with the determinations in the Admiralty Courts of this country, and cheerfully acquiesced in the principles upon which the proceedings here were

[1] The "rule of the War of 1756." See Moore, *Digest of International Law*, VII. 383.

founded. That if the fact was otherwise, and strong remonstrances were made by the Dutch government at that time against those proceedings, we might rather conclude it was not a point generally admitted as the settled law of nations. That the opinions of the British lawyers and judges in such an instance, however respectable, could be allowed as authorities only so far as they might show the opinion of a single nation, of a nation that was a party in the question, and whose judgment would therefore be more liable to a scruple than it would be in the case of a principle, which should have had the sanction of similar opinions in other countries.

He admitted in some measure the distinction, but said that the final acquiescence of the Dutch in the case alluded to appeared from the fact of its having produced no eventual difference between the two nations, and that as there was no common judge among sovereigns, every nation must consider its own decisions as authorities.

I then said that we thought there was a very material distinction between the two cases. That from such a knowledge as we had obtained of the transactions concerning the Dutch ships, we conceived the principle upon which they were held liable to condemnation, rested on the idea that they were adopted as French, for the purpose of covering French property, that they navigated by special licenses and were on no other ground admitted into the French colonies, insomuch that every Dutch vessel, not provided with such special license, was liable to the exclusions of the permanent French colonial system of that time, and on attempting to trade with the French colonies would have been subjected to the common condemnation of a prohibited commerce. That in our case, a general, permanent and unlimited decree, proceeding from the supreme authority of

the French nation, had permitted our intercourse with their colonies:[1] that our merchants had in consequence pursued the trade upon their own capitals, on their own account and risk, and there could, therefore, not be the same ground for presuming the sole intention of covering the property of parties to the war.

He said that the general nature of the decree would not in his opinion create a material difference, if as seemed evident from its date, it was adopted with an immediate view of the state of war into which the nation had just entered, and intended manifestly to obviate the distress which that state would naturally produce: "but I presume (he added) that the counsel for the American claims involving these questions will be instructed to urge this distinction before the Lords of Appeal": and on my answering that they doubtless would be, he said, that if it was found to be just, he believed it would have its proper weight on the minds of the Commissioners.

The question as to the extent of places besieged or blockaded was noticed, but not much dwelt upon. I stated our idea that it is by the law of nations limited to such places as may be surrounded in such a manner as to prevent the introduction of all supplies. He doubted whether the principle could be admitted in such a latitude, but appeared to be of opinion, that there would be no occasion at least for an immediate discussion of this article.[2]

A decision had already taken place at the last session of the Commissioners concerning property shipped in American names, but previously contracted for as French property and to become such at the moment of landing. The prop-

[1] The decree of March 26, 1793. See *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 363.

[2] See Moore, *Digest of International Law*, VII. 788, 797.

erty was condemned, and, indeed, Lord Grenville appeared to think there was very little weight in the arguments I urged in support of claims resting on that foundation. I said that even by the common law, a transfer of property was held to be completed only by the delivery of the article, and that where the shipment is on neutral account and risk, the loss in case of capture must fall upon the neutral owner too: but he said that in such circumstances the intention to *cover* the property appears so manifest, that he believed no impartial arbitrator would think it entitled to protection.

I had been informed by Mr. Bayard that in one of the late causes, a question had been started by one of the Lords Commissioners, whether potash is not to be considered in future as an article of contraband. I told his lordship that I felt it incumbent to take the earliest moment to be explicit on this subject. That the article was so important in the list of exports from the United States, that their interest would be most essentially injured by the assumption of such a principle, and I could see no possible ground upon which the pretension could be raised. He said that the occasion from whence the question arose was known to me: it was the use that had recently been made of this article for the fabrication of gunpowder. That the principle upon which all the modern treaties had defined the specific articles to be held as contraband, was the use which may be made of such materials for the purposes of war. That saltpetre itself had not been in the class of contraband before the use of gunpowder was discovered, and that it was perfectly equitable and conformable to the law of nations, that if in process of time any article should be made subservient to warlike employment which has not been previously thus used, it should be considered as having lost its character of innocence, and be involved in the proscription of contraband. I replied that if

it be even admitted, then an article unquestionably free may by a new application of it to warlike uses assume the dubious character of a mixed article, that could not surely authorize a single nation, without the concurrent assent of others, to place it upon the list of contraband: and having said thus much I should only add, that his Lordship had signed the treaty long after the new use of potash in France had been made and was universally notorious; and yet it was not mentioned in the treaty among the contraband articles. He said this last observation was certainly conclusive as far as relates to the United States.

One more observation relative to the Lords of Appeal will conclude the topics embraced in this conversation on their subject. I said that these claims had become an object so highly interesting to the people of the United States, that I could have wished they might have fairly laid before them the special point of every decision, particularly of those which might be unexpected to them, or variant from their interests. In such a case, if it were shown to their conviction, that the determination was supported by the admitted laws of nations, I had not a doubt but they would freely and cheerfully acquiesce. That I could not, therefore, but regret that the decrees of the Commissioners were frequently founded upon the *special circumstances of the case*, because the point of decision is thereby left uncertain, and we have no opportunity to discuss it, or to receive proper satisfaction of its justice. He admitted that it was desirable the point should appear as much as possible, but said that in these cases the law, the fact and the evidence were so blended, and became often so necessarily complicated, as made it impossible to reduce the determination to any single point, or to form it otherwise than upon the special circumstances of the case.

He afterwards mentioned the proposed agreement for the settlement of the minor cases by an *arbitration*. But I think best to leave this matter in its present state until Mr. Pinckney returns. Mr. Bayard states the original idea to have been of a sort of *compromise*, and between that and an *arbitration* to which Lord Grenville pertinaciously adheres, the difference is too great for me to give my assent to the alteration without instructions for my warrant. As Mr. Pinckney will be here in the course of a week or ten days at farthest, this delay can operate no material injury.

I repeated the request for a written minute of the agreement we had come to, concerning the pay of the Commissioners, and was told it should certainly be sent me shortly.

It is perhaps unnecessary for me to add many observations upon the substance of the above-related conversation. But as the mere statement may possibly have a tendency to raise expectations which may not be realized, I find myself obliged to say, that I have not the confidence in the general policy of this cabinet, or in the particular dispositions of any one member of it, that would lead me to any strong reliance upon mere verbal declarations: much less that would permit me to draw any inferences from them. The *manner* of Lord Grenville at this time was as apparently candid and favorable as the substance of what he said; but the effects alone are the proper grounds of dependence. If it be true that the Lords of Appeal will not extend any unfriendly principle beyond the clear doctrines of former precedent; if it be true that the manifest distinction between our West India trade during this war, and the case of the Dutch ships in 1758 will have its proper weight on their minds; if it be true that there will be no occasion to discuss the question as to the extent of places besieged or blockaded, we may expect a much more liberal measure of justice from

the decrees in which these points will be involved, than my belief will warrant. As to the doubt raised upon the nature of potash, the treaty certainly disposes of that, and indeed if it did not, the pretension of adding to the list of contraband by the authority of this nation alone is so absurd, that in any other than a British maritime court, I cannot conceive it would be seriously made.

As to the question of the domicile, nothing has yet been said upon which a conclusion might fairly be drawn. A candid disposition to agree upon the subject in an equitable manner is professed, and as it is reserved for further discussion it will of course be noticed in future communications.[1]

I have the honor &c.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING

LONDON, December 22, 1795.

Private.

SIR:

. . . . . .

One of the favorite objects of this government is an increase of the dominions in the East and West Indies. A formidable expedition with 25,000 troops has recently sailed for the latter, but has already met with two gales of wind extremely violent, which have damaged many of the vessels, and reduced considerably the numbers of men that go together. It has also been delayed in its departure at least three months later than was intended. It appears to be the general opinion here that it must inevitably succeed, that its force will be irresistible, and the whole island of St.

[1] In urging that instructions be sent to Pinckney, Washington wrote to Pickering, March 6, 1796: "Mr. Adams' letter, and Lord Grenville's propositions, relative to captured vessels of a certain description, and with respect to the pay of the commissioners, require immediate attention." *Writings of Washington* (Ford), XIII. 175.

Domingo is already in possession of this country by anticipation. Yet if it should fail, Englishmen may remember that it will not be the first instance of an invincible armada defeated, and considering the climate to which they are going the loss of three months of the season may be considered as equivalent to the loss of half of their men.

That they may succeed is not I think to be wished by Americans. For, Sir, it appears more and more clear that the real and ultimate object of this government in their present war, is to establish the commercial and maritime supremacy of the nation over the ruins of those of France. They have hitherto been so far successful in this project, that they are encouraged vigorously to pursue it, and if they can terminate the war by obtaining possession of Corsica, of the Cape of Good Hope, and of Martinico, with their own navy greatly increased, and that of France equally reduced, they will have gone very far towards securing their purpose. It is intimated by the ministerial partisans that little hesitation will be made here at giving up the Austrian Netherlands, and even the cause of the Stadtholder in the United Provinces, provided an indemnity shall be given to this country by an accession to its transmarine possessions. I have very little doubt of the fact, because the sacrifice of allies and the abandonment of solemn previous stipulations, would operate only as a removal of the mask, as soon as the purpose for which it was taken has been secured.

It is not merely from views of commercial aggrandizement, however, that the posession of the French islands in the West Indies is held as an object of the first magnitude in this country. It enters into all their calculations relative to the United States. It forms a part of their *defensive* system, and they believe that their commercial existence depends in some measure upon the event. This may serve

as a clue to the extreme anxiety which they have uniformly discovered since the commencement of this war to exclude the Americans not only from their own, but from all the foreign islands. It explains the orders of the 6th of November, 1793. It accounts for their obstinate adherence to that clause in the 12th article of the late treaty, which has been suspended. It is the key to that singular principle which they are now determined on their single authority to establish as the settled law of nations, that no other than the customary peace trade can be allowed to neutral nations, by a belligerent party in time of war. Anything that shall serve as a barrier between the United States and the West Indies will be attempted by them, and in addition to all their other grounds of alarm, they are now apprehensive that if France should retain her islands at the peace, she will be compelled, by her own want of navigation, to leave the intercourse between them and the United States as free to the latter as it has been since this war, and that she will be unable to resume the exclusive system at least for several years. The genius of the navigation act shudders at the prospect, and will think thousands of mere human lives, and millions of treasure, most profitably spent in preventing the reality.

But, as Mr. Hammond says, it is impossible for them to think of everything, and they sometimes find themselves obliged to yield to an irresistible course of events. I am sensible how dangerous a thing it is to deliver an opinion upon future occurrences, else I would venture to foretell that whatever *commercial* negotiations may at any time be carried on between the United States and Britain, whatever is given by the latter will be extorted by the necessity of the times, and nothing will be conceded to any liberality of system. There is no such thing as commercial liberality

in the country. To engross the commerce of the world to themselves is the professed or secret wish of every heart among them, and if there are a very small number who believe that the prosperity of other nations would rather advance than prejudice their own, the effect of this opinion is destroyed by the political consideration that their views would not be secured by their own *positive* advantage, without a correspondent *negative* for all other nations. The character of the former supposition is equality, but all *their* ideas run towards their superiority.

It is, therefore, a circumstance very remarkable that at this time there is before the Privy Council a proposal for admitting into the ports of this country the produce of foreign West India Islands, in neutral vessels — rum, sugar, coffee and cocoa, for re-exportation, and cotton and molasses for consumption here. The merchants appear to be of opinion that this will soon be permitted by proclamation, and if so the present would certainly be a favorable moment to us for negotiation upon this subject. But what has induced them to be prepared for a regulation so different from the spirit of the condition to the 12th article of the treaty? It is because their adherence to their own system has driven the Americans into another course of trade, from which it has not been practicable to exclude them: because that other course of trade not only tends to carry their custom elsewhere, but to give them the means and opportunity of tracing new channels for their commerce: because the merchants of this country are losing their American commissions, and ten per cent of profit upon the whole balance of the trade in the rate of exchange; in short, because their own apparent interest forces them to an indulgence equally adverse to their feelings and their principles. But if they can obtain possession of the French Islands, then the old maxims of

exclusion will be revived in all their force, and instead of resigning themselves to a mere participation of our profits, they will boldly resume the purpose of intercepting them from us.

The scarcity of grain has still an appearance so alarming, that the Parliament besides many regulations to reduce the consumption have also encouraged its importation by a bounty upon wheat, and upon Indian corn. It was at first proposed to make a distinction, so as to give a larger bounty on the importations from the Mediterranean, than on those from America; but they were finally put upon the same footing. The wants of Europe during the ensuing year will undoubtedly turn to the benefit of the United States as much as they have ever yet done, but on their part they must not suffer their patience to be yet exhausted. The American will infallibly triumph over the European system eventually, provided it be pursued with as much perseverance. But an hour of haste or resentment indulged in at the present moment would take the advantage which it now possesses from its hand, and throw the scale of probable success on this side of the water.

All my letters to you, Sir, public and private, have delivered my sentiments with a freedom which perhaps needs an apology, and which certainly nothing but an unlimited confidence can reconcile with personal prudence. A sense of duty it is hoped will be admitted at least as my excuse, and if my opinions are in any instance warped by prejudice, I am persuaded that your discernment will distinguish, and hope your candor will overlook them. I remain, etc.

TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

LONDON, December 24, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Mr. Johnson sent me a few days ago your favor of the 1st instant, inclosing the letter of Mr. Roos. I shall accordingly procure for him a copying press, with a considerable quantity of the paper and ink-powder. The directions for making the ink and for using the press are both in French and English, and must be attentively observed. I shall perhaps bring the press over with me, as I expect to return in the course of a few weeks. If, however, an earlier opportunity to send it shall offer, I will embrace it.

The most recent accounts from America contain the usual mixture of sweet and bitter, but with more than an ordinary quantity of both ingredients. The attack upon the President is still carried on with that virulence and brutality which have uniformly been characteristic of an American party mingling with a foreign influence. Mr. Randolph, I suppose, means to come forward with his publication at the moment when Congress shall meet. The depredations by the Bermuda privateers continue to irritate and fester the public mind, and the present session of the national legislature will doubtless produce great heats, and perhaps animosities; though I hope not any dangerous divisions.

It is not a little remarkable that this is the critical situation of our country at a moment when the national prosperity continues to grow with a luxuriance of which the annals of the world give no example. One would think our people determined to dash the cup of happiness from their own lips, merely because it overflows. To give you an instance of our commercial state, a Boston newspaper of October 14, states that within the month preceding that date, one hun-

dred sail of vessels had entered there from foreign ports. It is said here to be unquestionable, that the exports from the United States during the year ending September 30, 1795, amounted to more than thirty-five millions of dollars. When we recollect that at the same date only four years before, one half of this sum was considered as the proof of some extraordinary cause, which would not be supported to an equal extent during the years subsequent, is it possible to avoid the reflection, that the American government, and the President in particular, do not meet with that retribution which has been richly deserved? At the present moment if our neutrality be still preserved, it will be due to the President alone. Nothing but his weight of character and reputation, combined with his firmness and political intrepidity, could have stood against the torrent that is still tumbling with a fury that resounds even across the Atlantic. He is now pledged, and he is unmoved. If his system of administration now prevails, ten years more will place the United States among the most powerful and opulent nations on earth. If he fails, though the Demon of Discord may raise a cloud of prejudice and obloquy around the splendor of his fame for the present moment, it will only serve to add a brighter radiance to his future glory. Yet I deprecate this event because the value of his administration will in that case be proved by the deprivation of the blessings it has secured to his country.

This, my good friend, is not the language of a courtier. You and I have known the time when *not to applaud* the man who united all hearts was almost held to be a crime. Should that time return again while he lives, *my* tribute of veneration and gratitude shall again remain silent in my heart. But now, when he does not unite all hearts, when on the contrary a powerful party at home, and a mighty influence from

abroad, are joining all their forces to assail his reputation and his character, I think it my duty as an American to avow my sentiments as they concern that man.

You know, I suppose, that in the course of the last summer a peace was concluded with all the western Indians. The last papers mention the receipt of official news of the peace with the Algerines.[1] In addition to these may be reckoned the successful issue of Mr. Pinckney's negotiation in Spain.[2] In this country a relaxation from the rigor of their navigation laws has already become inevitable, if they remain at war, and we at peace. Here are objects secured by our neutrality, and by that alone. Compare them with the most advantageous issue that a war might by any possibility have had, and tell me what you think of those who still hesitate about the choice? Though by the way, I suspect the Algerine peace is to be abused, and we are to be told it might have been had upon infinitely better terms.

There is another pretty story current, arising from the same source, but which it is to be feared will now lose its use. It is, that when France and Spain were negotiating their late peace, one of the articles *insisted on* by the former was navigation of the Mississippi for us. But upon Mr. Pinckney's going through Paris without communicating to the French government Mr. Jay's treaty, the Committee of Public Safety immediately sent orders to Barthélemy to give up that point. I have this account as coming from the *express knowledge* of Mr. Monroe.[3] Had Mr. Pinckney failed,

[1] Concluded September 5, 1795, by Joseph Donaldson, Jr., on the part of the United States. The text is in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 530.

[2] Taking form in the treaty of October 27, 1795, which reached the United States February 22, 1796, and was ratified by a unanimous vote of the Senate.

[3] *Monroe to Madison*, September 8, 1795, in *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 355. Pinckney did not ask the interference of France, because he knew the displeasure felt by the treaty with England. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 82.

what a charming anecdote this was to make the treaty with Britain odious, and to give a lift to the influence of France. But alas! when the generous bounty of the Committee was withdrawn, it seems the United States could obtain the same thing on their own account. But perhaps, indeed, the tale will be worth keeping up, to show what France would have done for us, if we had been good children.

It is on this ground that the treaty with Algiers is to be blamed. I know nothing of the circumstances attending that negotiation; but I perceive that a great deal of credit is meant to be given to the French government for what they would have done for us in that matter, if time had been given them, and, therefore, I conclude they had little or no hand in what *was* done.[1]

That the Americans now in France should love the French nation and admire the French Republic, is natural and rational. They are a most amiable people. Few Americans have had an opportunity to be more acquainted with what they formerly were than I have, and if I do not look on them as the first people on the face of the globe, it is only because *I have a country*. The American people are under obligations to France. I acknowledge them and would have them repaid with honor and generosity: nor can I dissent from the feelings of gratitude which actuate so strongly our countrymen in France on that account. But if there are Americans who have considered *speculation* in the funds of the United States as almost a disqualification for political opinions, and those very Americans have speculated in the funds of the French Revolution, I think it would become them to be

[1] The French consul was originally concerned in the negotiation, and Humphreys was directed to obtain the coöperation of the French government. The event was largely due, however, to the aid of a Swede, Pierre Eric Skjoldebrand, who was associated with Donaldson.

moderate in their panegyrics, or expect that their opinions will be taken with a grain of allowance.

. . . . . .

I remain &c

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, December 29, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

When I say I hope to be relieved from my present situation in a few days, I wish not to have my motives misunderstood. In my letter from Helvoetsluys you will find that I came over here not unaware of what my business might draw upon myself, and when you advise me to be of good cheer and courage, it must be from a consideration of the thing in a similar perspective. But I should be a wretched servant of my country indeed, if I were capable of shrinking from the performance of a public service, because it may be disagreeable or even dangerous. When I am clearly convinced that my duty commands me to act, if the love of ease, or the love of life, or the love of fame itself, dear as it is, could arrest my hand, or give me a moment's hesitation in the choice, I should certainly be fit for no situation of public trust whatever. This principle is a moral obligation upon every man in office, and I hope not to be considered as destitute of it. "Universal reproach" is indeed "far worse to bear than violence"; but I am fully sensible that it must never interfere with the dictates of one's own mind for the regulation of his conduct.

So much for the principle. But I may go a little further. The struggle against a popular clamor is not without its charms in my mind. Nothing great or valuable among men was ever achieved without the counterpoise of strong op-

position, and the persecution, that proceeds from opinion becomes itself a title to esteem, when the opinion is found to have been erroneous. There are, indeed, situations in which no service can be rendered, without the assistance and support of popularity; but there are others in which it can be of no public advantage, and in that case popular opposition is nothing more than a danger to defy, or a difficulty to overcome. To say that the danger may prove fatal, or the difficulty insuperable, is no more than to say that a soldier marching to battle may leave his life upon the field.

It is not therefore the dread of newspaper scurrility or of a burning effigy that is irksome to me at the present moment, or that induces a wish to be relieved from the execution of the business for which I was ordered hither. It is another thing which was equally within my expectation before I came from Holland, but which I have found to a greater extent than I imagined. It is that all commercial negotiation on the part of this country will be captious and illiberal. That nothing will be conceded but to necessity, and everything will be obtained that artifice or cajolery can pilfer, or that insolence under all the forms of courtly politeness can extort. I have been accustomed all my life to plain dealing and candor, and am not sufficiently versed in the art of political swindling to be prepared for negotiating with an European Minister of State. In other words, besides numerous other deficiencies of which on this occasion I am strongly sensible, I have not the *experience* which the proper performance of the duty would require. It is not my intention to be abusive, or to call things by harder names than they deserve; but my correspondence with the Secretary of State will shew to demonstration what sort of negotiators I have found here.

Lord Grenville is extremely plausible, and has the *art of*

simplicity to an eminent degree. If I am not misinformed he affects the reputation of having a word upon which dependence may be placed. But I have no reason to believe in his candor or his sincerity. Mr. Hammond is an under Secretary of State in his office. He is only cunning, and though he may thereby successfully practise an imposition, he is too easily seen through to obtain the confidence necessary for thorough-paced intrigue.[1]

Between them both they have partially executed a hopeful project upon me, the only result of which hitherto has been to place me in an awkward and ridiculous situation, but which might have led me into very improper conduct, and such as might even have drawn at least a color of censure upon the American government itself. The ultimate object of this manœuvre has not yet been unfolded, though I think I know what it is. It will perhaps never be worth my pains to write, or yours to read, a tedious detail of a transaction, insignificant in itself, and to which circumstances only may give importance. Should that prove the case, you shall have the story at full length. At present I shall only say that it suited their purposes to convert me into a minister *to this Court*, and that they have persevered in this intention with such a supple obstinacy, that one of my principal cares has been to disclaim the proffered acknowledg-

[1] "I have reason to believe that the anxiety and perseverance with which the design was pursued on my arrival here, of recognizing me in a character to which I had neither right nor pretensions, was for the purpose of fixing me as the negotiator for the remainder of the treaty, to the exclusion of Mr. Pinckney. Indeed, in the course of the discussions which were produced by my resistance against that design, Mr. Hammond very intelligibly intimated to me, that this government considered it as a sort of engagement on the part of the American government, that this negotiation was to be conducted by me, and he expressed in terms not very equivocal an idea that Mr. Pinckney was viewed here as unfriendly to this government, and that they should have a decided preference for treating with me, rather than with him." *To the Secretary of State*, January 20, 1796. Ms.

ment of a rank to which I have no title, and to avoid every act that could make me accessary to an usurpation of character. The determination on my part has been pursued with the utmost candor and frankness. On theirs they have neither been ingenuous to avow their design, nor compliant to abandon it.

But in this singular contest, while they are so liberal of their acknowledgments and I am obliged to persist in declining them, the result of the whole matter is that I am not in my proper place. This conclusion, combining with the species of negotiation that I should expect from those who have already given me such specimens, leads me to the wish of having nothing more to do with them, and of being relieved from a situation of personal embarrassment to myself, and of little or no probable utility to the public.

Mr. Pinckney is hourly expected to return, and his experience and character, as well as his talents, are much better adapted to treat with men to whom action is an ambush and thought a strategem, than I am.[1] As to the *subject* of negotiation, you know that the point of the twelfth article of the late treaty touches the ark of their navigation system, and you may judge from thence what a disposition they will have to be liberal on that score. After they have been to the very verge of a war with the United States by their endeavors to exclude the Americans from the French islands, it is hardly to be supposed that they will readily give us access to their own. But at present their own interest so loudly calls on them for a relaxation of their navigation laws, that they now find themselves obliged to submit to it in a degree, and possibly they may be more inclined towards an agree-

[1] Pinckney arrived in London, January 13, 1796, returning from his mission to Spain. He had written to Washington, October 10, 1795, asking to be released from office in June, 1796.

ment advantageous to our interests than they have been hitherto. Of this however I can say nothing positive not having had any conversation with them from which any inference can be drawn.

. . . . . .

The principle upon which they meant to have carried through the 6th of November [1793] orders, is that a belligerent power is under no obligation to allow any trade between a neutral nation and the other belligerent than the customary peace trade. This rule they have endeavored in former wars to establish, and they have not yet abandoned it. I had not long since a conversation with one of their eminent professional men on the subject. He endeavored to convince me that the maxim is highly favorable to the permanent national interest of the United States. "Separate yourselves" said he "from the mere temporary consideration of present circumstances. You are a commercial nation, and the only powers with whom you will be liable to be engaged in war are those that have possessions in the West Indies. There is the part in which you may expect to find them most vulnerable. But if you admit the principle that at the moment when you may be involved in such a war your antagonist may open to neutral nations, a trade which in time of peace he always reserves exclusively to himself, you disarm yourselves of the most efficacious weapon you have." I told him that the Americans chose rather to admit the Law of Nations as *it is*, than to aim at the settlement of principles which might be favorable to their particular interest; and further that they did not wish to suppose a state of war between themselves and any other nation, as it was their desire to remain at peace with all the world.

I am in anxious expectation of the accounts from America since the meeting of Congress. There is every reason to

apprehend that the session will be a period of political warmth, if not of animosity. The direct and formal attack upon the President, which has been carried on in the usual style, and which is noticed in your letter, was not unexpected to me, and I think you must have received very soon after the date of yours a letter from me written at the Hague in July or August, containing the opinions I had then formed on that head. That the systematic course of abuse pointed against him, and which was arranged in Europe before it was put in execution in America, is connected with the scheme for dividing the American executive, is perhaps nothing more than a conjecture on my part; but I have little doubt, that it was merely preparatory for the purpose of bringing forward in due time a change of men or of government in our country.

It is however proper for me on this occasion to observe, that I believe there are two different branches of the system, which plays with so much efficacy across the Atlantic upon the passions and upon the opinions of the American people. One of these branches is not hostile to the real interest of the United States, or at least it is much less so than the other. The attack proceeded from the most unfriendly quarter, and if it had the acquiescence of the other, as an experiment it had not their approbation; and if it should fail of success, it is not improbable but the trial of honey will be substituted for that of vinegar. Excuse this trivial image. I can mean nothing ludicrous in speaking upon such a subject; it conveys merely my idea of *their* intentions, and I would not have used it, if I could venture to be more explicit.

I am &c.[1]

[1] "The newspapers sent herewith contain intelligence of two important events. The armistice concluded between the French and Austrian armies on the Rhine, and the return into port of the famous West India expedition. It remains as yet

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, February 10, 1796.

. . . . . .

Mr. Randolph's pamphlet[1] had arrived before Mr. Hall, but I had seen only some extracts from it, which were and yet are dealt out in some of the daily papers here. I think he rolls the stone of Sisyphus with a more impetuous recoil than I ever witnessed before. I confess I should never have thought that even the delirium of guilt could publish *such* a production, and imagine it would injure the reputation of the President, or defend that of the writer. In my last numbered letter to you I mentioned an opinion that the party in France would perhaps return to the courting system, and I am almost tempted to believe that they advised this publication by way of atonement. For it seems to me impossible that the production should have been given to the world, but by the agency of a person inveterate even to rancor against Mr. Randolph, and disposed to raise the character of the President higher if possible than its former elevation.

But the publication to the world of confidential opinions and sentiments entertained by the President with respect to the European parties and governments, will produce in a degree the effect for which it was calculated. They will produce some mischief. The sensation here upon seeing a

uncertain whether the former is a presage of speedy pacification, or a mere agreement to take a breathing spell during the extremity of the season. As a neutral nation, deeply interested in the fate of the West Indies, *we* I think may consider the failure of the formidable apparatus of this country as a favorable event. While Britain weakens by war, and America strengthens by peace, every true American must feel a double satisfaction." *To John Adams*, February 1, 1796. MS.

[1] *A Vindication of Mr. Randolph's Resignation*, Philadelphia, 1795. See Conway, *Omitted Chapters of History disclosed in the Life and Papers of Edmund Randolph*, 1888.

proclamation to all the world that the President has been inimical to England, and the friend of the French cause, is very perceptible and very strong. It will not only corroborate and confirm that deep rooted malignity towards us which governs the cabinet, but it alienates and irritates the part of the nation who are well disposed towards us.

They have however so much at present upon their hands that they will not quarrel with us. But no small use will be made of this pamphlet by the Ministers of this country. I have reason to suppose that it has given them great satisfaction, for their purposes concur so thoroughly with those of Mr. Randolph, that they seize with delight everything that contributes to promote them. It is one of those singularities which seem reserved exclusively for the complication of political intrigues, that the views of our French party and those of the Hawkesbury[1] conclave here, are exactly the same, and accordingly they are continually playing into each other's hands. They wish to perpetuate the differences between the United States and Britain, and are ready to catch at everything that has a tendency to that end. On this subject I think it necessary to give you my opinion explicitly. The cabinet here have of late affected a great regard for the *Government* of the United States. In this particular too they have coincided with our most virulent anarchists, and have taken all possible pains to countenance and give credit to *their* assertions that the American administrations were upon terms of great harmony with that of Britain. The truth is that the American *Government*, and those who are at the head of its administration, have not upon earth more rancorous enemies, than the springs which move the executive machine of this country. They know perfectly well that the strength, as well as the prosperity,

[1] Charles Jenkinson (1727–1808), who was created Earl of Liverpool in 1796.

of the United States, depend upon the efficiency of the Government; and above all things they dread the proof which any continued course of tranquillity would afford that it is a good practical government. In short every one of their feelings, individual and national, is hostile to us, and the policy of Vergennes and Montmorin to prevent our acquiring a consistency which would make us really formidable, is here envenomed by the recollection of former defeat and disappointment.

Between the United States and Great Britain no *cordiality* can exist. I do not think it is on our part to be desired. But peace may, and I hope will, continue, notwithstanding all the conspiracies that have been formed against it in America and Europe.[1]

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TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, March 20th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The people indeed everywhere ardently sigh for peace. Everywhere they perceive that they have been made the victims of their own passions and follies. They are every-

[1] "Mr. Adams, who was with me this morning [February 22, 1796], in his wrath and indignation at the conduct of the British government, seemed absolutely mad. He breathed nothing but war, and was content to run into it at the hazard of our finances and even of our Constitution. Such sentiments arise in him only for the moment and would not certainly influence his conduct; but such language, if held to those who should repeat it, must do mischief here. I tell him, when he asserts that the administration of this country means ill to us, that I think they only mean good to themselves, excepting always only two or three men who are personally vexed at our prosperity." *Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris*, II. 157. Adams records in his Diary (Ms.) the same day: "Conversation with Mr. Morris. Do not at all concur in his opinions. Think him more decidedly English the more I see of him."

where becoming more and more convinced that the struggle which they are still obliged to maintain, although its original object has completely failed on both sides, can only be destructive to them, and they would gladly bury in oblivion the abstracted madness which created such a fanatical agitation of their brains about three years ago. But in all the governments of Europe new and old the people are considered as an instrument, not as the object, of political calculations. Their interests, their feelings, and their wishes are not the ultimate point of contemplation, but only a power over which the control of the superintendent is more or less efficacious according to the progress of events. The ruling powers therefore here and in France, finding the spirits of their combatants much exhausted, encourage them with hopes of peace, and at the same time are taking infinite pains to continue the war, and to shift each upon the other the odium of that continuance.

At the opening of the present session of Parliament the royal speech prepared the way for a sort of acknowledgment of the new French government, without which no pretence of negotiation could have been raised and supported.[1] Soon after a message from the king formally declared that he would meet any disposition to negotiate on the part of France.[2] Upon a debate which recently took place Mr. Pitt declared that measures were taking which might lead to a negotiation, and even at this day reports of actually pending arrangements are industriously circulated and kept up by the ministerial influence. On the other hand a message from the Executive Directory of France to the Legislative body some time since expressly said that the enemies, or rather that enemies, of France had spoken of peace, and

[1] Speech from the Throne, October 29, 1795, in *Annual Register*, 1795, 138.

[2] Message from the King, December 8, 1795. *Ibid.*, 140.

the same message professed a very cordial desire to terminate the war.[1]

All this on both sides appears to be mere profession without sincerity. If the parties were really inclined to peace, their pretensions as to the conditions of it are too widely distant for them to meet without a further struggle. But the governments both of France and Britain dread the consequences of peace themselves. The armies of France are such formidable and unwieldy machines that the persons in power are very unwilling to take them from that employment which removes their attention from home; while in this country the monarchy and aristocracy view in horror the prospect of a Republican establishment so near to themselves.

The last pamphlet of Burke, which I lately sent you, discovers this temper in its natural colors, and another, professedly written upon the subject and entitled "Thoughts upon the Prospect of a Regicide Peace," is announced for publication within a short period. Their object is probably to make a further experiment at fanaticizing the public mind, or at least to revive the flame which has long been drooping, and of late has been ready to expire. It is contending yet for ground which the ministers no longer dare openly to avow, but which their ostensible declarations rather disclaim.

. . . . . .

Your ever affectionate and grateful son.

[1] In April the English government printed letters which had passed between William Wickham, English *chargé d'affaires* in Switzerland, and Barthélemi, in which the latter rejected the suggestion of a congress for a general pacification.

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, April 4, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have some reason to suppose that the anti-neutral views of the French government extend even to Hamburg and Bremen, but their principal object will be the United States. They are undoubtedly dissatisfied with the treaty between us and Great Britain. This dissatisfaction does not however proceed from themselves. It has been inspired by Americans at Paris, who foster and encourage it with all possible industry, and with ability profoundly systematic.[1] *From* them (though I will not affirm *by* them) the French government are led to believe, that this treaty will finally throw the United States *à corps perdu* into the arms of Britain, that we shall soon be totally lost to France, and that unless the treaty can be overturned France must consider us henceforth as an infallible ally of Britain against her. With such a doctrine, coming from a source which they naturally consider as respectable, inculcated and corroborated by the *personal* talents of a man like Hichborn,[2] and counter-

[1] "You will be surprised to hear that the only Americans whom I found here were a set of New Englandmen connected with Britain and who, upon British capital, were trading to this country: that they are hostile to the French revolution is what you well know: but that they should be thriving upon the credit which the efforts of others in other quarters gain the American name here, you could not expect: that as such they should be in possession of the little confidence we had and give a tone to characters on our side of the Atlantic was still less to be expected. But such was the fact." *Monroe to Madison*, June 30, 1795. *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 313. "All the Americans recognized by Mr. Monroe were allowed to remain there [Paris], notwithstanding the late decree." *John Quincy Adams to Joshua Johnson*, June 2, 1796. Ms.

[2] Benjamin Hichborn, described by Monroe as "an American gentleman of character here (from Massachusetts)," gave Monroe his first knowledge of the contents of the Jay treaty, having been made acquainted with them by John Trumbull. *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 243.

acted by no one American in France, it may well be supposed that they have taken an alarm against a treaty which, but for these incitements, they would have seen with perfect indifference. Whether the late Minister Adet has been an obstacle to the furtherance of these views I know not, but probably it may be known to our government. The principal reason I have to think he did not suit them is, that they have never used the common artifices of party blazoning to give him weight. Be this as it may, he is recalled,[1] and a man by the name of Vincent [2] is to go out in his stead. It is reported with that sort of mystery which intends to spread a secret, that he is to speak a very high language to our government, and it seems even to be insinuated that a clue is given him to demand a right which it is supposed will bring the British treaty to the test of execution. At the same time Mr. Thomas Paine, who lives as an inmate in the house of Mr. Monroe, is writing one of his efficacious pamphlets upon the subject, and this, his occupation, is announced with much importance, to prepare public expectation for the appearance of the production.[3]

To all these manœuvres there will undoubtedly be others correspondent in America. At the present stage of things

[1] On February 15, Monroe was informed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Directory considered the alliance between France and the United States to have ceased to exist from the moment the Jay treaty was ratified, and they would send a special envoy to make such a representation to the American government; that Adet had asked and obtained his recall. Monroe expressed astonishment and concern, protesting against the policy and even the safety of such a step; and while he believed he had succeeded in toning down the anger of the government, and in leading to less stringent measures, the sense of injury remained. Adet remained in office until November 15, and in the country until the spring of 1797, for the purpose of influencing the election of 1796. As marking the displeasure of the French government no successor was nominated.

[2] Probably Pierre-Charles-Victor Vincent (1749–1817).

[3] See *Writings of James Monroe*, II. 440.

I know not upon what the hopes of the party rest, but I think it must be upon the refusal of the House of Representatives to pass the laws necessary for the execution of the treaty. Randolph, who is no longer *a body devoid of weight dragged along by the current of events;* Randolph, who has been at length compelled to *decide on his party* and, as it should seem, even without receiving the purchase money for his duty; Randolph, of whom the party are now ashamed, but who hopes to retrieve in their eyes his *changeable* errors by his present devotion, has formally taken this ground in their behalf, and they will doubtless adhere to it as long as it shall be tenable. If the question should be brought forward during the present session of Congress, the operations which I have mentioned above will not have time to produce their effect. They will therefore endeavor to pass this session without coming to the trial, and reserve all their engines to play upon the next.

If in conformity to the treaty, the Western posts should be delivered up on the first of June, I think that all these plans, deeply concerted and ably conducted as they are, will fail. The treaty will be fully carried into effect, and without making us the allies of Britain or the enemies of France it will preserve our peace for the present with both. But will the posts be delivered? I hope they will, though I have little confidence in the dispositions of this government, and as little in any exertions here to procure the delivery, if it should in any manner depend upon anything to be done or said on the part of the United States.

The French government have perhaps been more readily induced to adopt fears and resentments against the treaty, from an idea that at present its defeat must be followed by a war between us and Britain, a war upon their favorite system, which should leave them at liberty to make their

peace without binding them to a common cause. They are now better prepared for this system of policy than they were the last year, for their provisions are in tolerable abundance, and they do not depend upon our neutrality for subsistence. They are therefore perhaps more strenuously inclined to provoke us against Britain, and to enforce the views of the party in America who hope for war, because they think it would prove the destruction of what Fauchet calls *the treasurer's plans.*

There may possibly be another object connected with that of stimulating a rupture with Britain, the success of which may be considered as important towards that purpose. The Presidential elections are to take place in the course of the present year. The experiment of an attack upon the popularity of the President was made the last autumn and winter. It was indeed altogether unsuccessful, but it prepared the way for the repetition of an assault, whenever the circumstances should be favorable to the purpose. The party are inveterate against the President, because they now think him pledged in opposition to their views, and their object has therefore been to impress the French rulers with an opinion that he is inimical to their cause. This design has not been entirely unsuccessful. Fauchet's certificate openly avows the idea, and if the accounts I have heard from France are true, the style of American conduct and conversation at Paris is by no means calculated to remove the impression. That the impression exists among the members of the French government Mr. Pinckney since his return here assures me to be the case; nor is it difficult, since Randolph's pamphlet has been published, to trace the origin of the prejudice and some of the motives on which it is founded.

One of the great negotiators under Lewis the 14th, the

Comte d'Avaux,[1] lays it down as a fundamental rule, that the only successful mode of treating with the Dutch Republic is by a constant and unremitting excitement of *fear* in the minds of the ruling men. This maxim is not laid down in Mably's [2] principles of negotiation, but its application appears to have survived the French monarchy, and to be transferred beyond the Atlantic. It may be remembered how Genet in all his newspaper controversies perpetually threatened us with the vengeance of his Republic, and how faithfully his subalterns echoed his terrific strains. Since his time the French Ministers have been more guarded in their menaces, but the party have been very indulgent to wield the same weapon for them. Thus Mr. Randolph not only talks now of the "*crisis which he fears may disturb our harmony with France*," but even in August, 1794, could speak of "*the hazard of mortally offending the French.*" How? Why, "*by the punctilious observance of neutrality.*" Thus many a letter from France has been written for the American public to raise an opinion of French resentment against the treaty, when nothing but the desire to stimulate that resentment existed. Thus we are in future to be told that France will defeat our treaty with Algiers, that she will shut us out from a participation of her commerce, perhaps even that she is at the point of declaring war against us. All these things are bottomed upon the principle of d'Avaux, and perhaps others, which may be supposed to contain powers of personal operation upon the feelings of our first magistrate, will continue to be employed, however discouraging the ill success of the former attempts may have been.

On one hand therefore he will be courted by the prospect of every support from the party, and on the other that of an

[1] Jean-Antoine de Mesmes, Comte d'Avaux (1640–1709).

[2] Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (1709–1785).

opposition at least against the unanimity which marked the two preceding elections, will be suffered to be seen, under an expectation that it will have its influence in conciliating the sentiments of the person to the measures of the party. If this should not succeed, the attack of the last season will be renewed with redoubled impetuosity, and if they cannot hope to turn the balance of election they flatter themselves that at least they can induce retirement or resignation from the disgust of ill treatment. Such it seems according to Fauchet's letter was the policy upon which the persecution against Mr. Hamilton was conducted, and they will have double reasons for pursuing it in this instance.

The removal of the President, however effected in the tactics of the combined French and party powers, is to be followed by a plan for introducing into the American Constitution a Directory instead of a President, and for taking from the supreme Executive the command of the armed force. This hopeful project has been intimated to you in a former letter. How far it has been shaped and organized I know not; whether the course of events will prevent its advancement as a practical measure I shall not pretend to say; but of the design to bring it forward at the first favorable moment I have not the shadow of a doubt.

The great error of the party in America has uniformly been to grasp at too much, to place too great a dependence upon the efficacy of their exertions, and to calculate upon a popular temper much more favorable to their views than the fact has ever proved. Notwithstanding all their experience I think they are repeating the same mistake, and I consider this as one of the indications that they will eventually fail in their present as they have heretofore done in their former objects. They now build their principal hopes upon the non-delivery of the forts, and there is no circum-

stance that would so much confound and mortify them as a faithful execution of the treaty by the British in that article. This circumstance is so obvious, that it might be urged with great force as an inducement to decide this government if they were wavering on the point. The mode of introducing the argument would indeed be a delicate point, but I am sure it would have weight. Perhaps it has been or will be urged.

They take for granted that there will be no delivery. This they presume will of course produce a refusal on our part to carry the treaty into execution, the result of which will be a decisive rupture between us and Britain, and a consequent triumph of French party, French principles, and French influence in the United States.

It is, however, now so late in the season that the present year may be considered as secured, and by the close of this campaign it appears probable that even France and Britain will be prepared for serious negotiation. The increasing clamors for peace on both sides of the channel will perhaps compel the two governments to meet upon some composition of terms, and in that case neither France, nor her humble adorers in America, will be so strenuous to provoke the quarrel, as they have been hitherto, and still are.

Against the maritime supremacy of this country, the French government will indeed have a permanent motive to unite her own powers with others; nor do I think it an object to be neglected by any of the powers to whom the liberty of commerce and navigation is interesting. The principles of the armed neutrality, which have been so long dispersed by the hurricane of the revolutionary contest, may again be collected as the storm subsides, and at this day all the governments which acceded to that system originally, are doubtless again convinced of its importance, with the exception only of Russia. It will indeed after the termination

of the present war be more important than ever, because the naval preponderance of Britain will then be greater than it has been at any former period. If, therefore, independent of the present contest, a plan should be proposed for concerting the means to check the spirit of domination upon the sea, which Britain has so long avowed, and which becomes formidable in proportion as her comparative strength augments, the government will without doubt give it all the consideration that may be proper. . . .

COMMISSION TO PORTUGAL

GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States of America

To John Quincy Adams — Greeting

Reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Integrity, Prudence and Ability, I have nominated and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, do appoint you the said John Quincy Adams, Minister Plenipotentiary for the United States of America at the Court of her most Faithful Majesty, authorizing you hereby to do and perform all such matters and Things as to the said Place of Office doth appertain, or as may be duly given you in charge hereafter, and the said office to hold and exercise during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being. IN TESTIMONY whereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand at the City of Philadelphia, the Thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the twentieth.

GEO. WASHINGTON.

By the President of the United States,

(SEAL) TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Secretary of State.*[1]

[1] It is not thought necessary to print the instructions issued for his conduct in Portugal, for he never entered upon this mission. They concerned the trade in American flour and the commercial regulations applied in Portugal and her colonial possessions in America.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
[Timothy Pickering]

The Hague, June 4, 1796.

. . . . . .

If the war by land be thus brought to a close, the whole force and attention of the French government will of course be turned towards the means of balancing the British naval force, and of assaulting the remaining antagonist in her only vulnerable part. For this purpose measures will perhaps be pursued to raise other maritime enemies against Great Britain. In Europe, the Italian States, Spain, Denmark, Sweden and even Hamburg and Bremen may be stimulated, in various manners to shut the Baltic and the Mediterranean against the British commerce, and it will best be known to you, Sir, whether inducements of a similar nature will be presented to the United States. I have understood that it was not long since in the contemplation of the Directory, to send out an envoy extraordinary with a special mission to America, but that this intention has since been laid aside.

Upon my arrival here, I found an administration differently organized from that to which I was accredited, and even from that which I had left here the last autumn. The supreme authority of the republic is now held by a National Assembly, and the States General have been formally dissolved. . . .

The president of the National Assembly for the time being is, under the present arrangements, *ex officio*, president of the Diplomatic Committee.[1] I visited him of course immediately after my return. He announced the circumstance to the Assembly, who thereupon directed their agent

[1] Vos van Steenwyk.

[Slicher] to compliment me in their name upon my arrival, with the most cordial assurances of their regard and friendship for the United States, which he accordingly did yesterday. . . .[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, June 6, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

At length I have been released from a situation equally remote from all public utility and all personal satisfaction. After a detention which I could not avoid, but which was at least unnecessary, of several months, I left London on the 28th of last month, and arrived here on the 31st. The people there were in the midst of the Saturnalian electioneering holidays. The writs issued for the new Parliament are made returnable on the 12th of July. The changes will not be numerous, and the majorities of the Minister will be as great as they have been hitherto. Such at least was the general opinion, which was confirmed by the elections that had been made previous to my departure.

[1] "Within three weeks after the first meeting of the Assembly, the person who was mentioned to you as having united almost every vote as their president, and who has frequently been noticed in my former letters, Mr. Paulus, died. The loss of a man whose talents and activity had been so peculiarly conspicuous from the commencement of the recent revolution, has been, and will continue to be felt severely by the patriots of the nation. In the accomplishment of the alliance with France, and of a national convocation to form a constitution for the republic, he had been essentially instrumental, and his exertions had succeeded at least far beyond the common expectation in reanimating the maritime power of the country. The objects to which he directed the application of his efforts, were those upon which the national system of policy depends, and his abilities were the more serviceable as they are much more rarely met with than those which are engrossed by a contracted spirit of detail." *To Secretary of State*, June 11, 1796. Ms.

The account of the resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States relative to the British treaty, passed on the 17th of April, had arrived a few days before I came away. It was brought by the *Arab*, a sloop of war dispatched from New York expressly for the purpose, and which had a passage of only twenty-three days. The resolution was considered as the natural precursor of a final decision not to pass the laws necessary to carry the treaty into effect on the part of the United States, and the sensation which the intelligence produced was even greater than I should have expected. I confess it made me doubly desirous to quit a country, where the malevolence that is so common against America was exulting in the triumph with which it pointed to the event, as a proof of our executive imbecility, or of our legislative perfidy. It was difficult to refute both the alternatives, and I retired with pleasure from the humiliating task of palliating what I felt myself altogether incapable to justify.

To all the Americans in England that I met with after the news of this resolution, it was quite unexpected, as their accounts from home had uniformly led them to the hope or fear of a different event. But I cannot say the case was thus with me, and in my letter of April 4, which I hope has reached you before this, you will find at full length the opinion that I then held upon the subject. As a party manœuvre the proceedings to which the House have given their sanction was well conducted, and indeed it would be blindness not to perceive that the operations of that party are conducted with a skill, and perseverance, and harmony, and consistency, which the friends of the government seldom discover. That all the weight of French influence was exerted on that occasion is unquestionable. The delivery of the forts was a thing too much dreaded by them, to be suf-

fered without a struggle. That event would have been the death blow to all their hopes of engaging the United States in the war, and they well knew it was inevitable, if the treaty did not first meet with non-compliance on our part. Under the present circumstances the forts will assuredly not be delivered, and the party who have succeeded in preventing it, will make them again the watchword of their war-whoop. You may depend upon it as a certain fact, that the French policy of the present day is determined upon involving us yet in the war. From the complexion of the present House of Representatives I have strong apprehensions that they will succeed; if they do, we shall not be found despicable enemies. But what will become of our national government? What will become of our federal union? I am unwilling to look the prospect in the face.

If the late proceedings of the House were to be considered merely as the flashes of anger and resentment against the British government, whatever my opinion of their wisdom might be, I should concur with my whole soul in the motives, and should have comparatively but trifling apprehensions of the consequences. But the wound is evidently deeper, the symptoms indicate an infallible struggle between the popular and executive branches of our government. In such a struggle what will become of the executive? Especially if it should get encumbered with such a distressing war as they are endeavoring to excite. In my opinion it must inevitably fall.

The system of French government in America is not changed as far as I can discover. But an alteration of measures has certainly taken place. The bullying embassy which I mentioned in my N. 19 as being in contemplation is now said to be laid aside, and even Mr. Paine's threatened pamphlet has not yet appeared. He has only published a

piece upon the English finances,[1] which I sent you from London, and which in his own opinion amply revenges all the injuries and insults which the United States and France have received from Great Britain for the last four years. What the present views of the American representation in France are I am unable to say, but the final object of the French system is still to involve us in war and to new model our executive. . . .

TO CHARLES ADAMS

THE HAGUE, June 9, 1796.

. . . . . .

That a dissolution of the union would be the consequence of a war with Great Britain, I think very probable; but the dissolution of the union is perhaps rather a subject of hope than of fear, to those who are hurrying the nation to its disgrace and calamity. If there be a Frenchman who governs and conducts the party that now commands a majority, you may rest assured that neither he, nor those from whom he receives his impulse, have dispositions at all favorable to the American union.

My sentiments, I confess, are widely different. All my hopes of national felicity and glory have invariably been founded upon the continuance of the union. I have cherished these hopes with so much fondness, they have so long been incorporated into my ideas of public concern, that I cannot abandon them without a pang, as keen as that of a dissolving soul and body. Much as I must disapprove of the general tenor of southern politics I would rather even yield to their unreasonable pretensions and suffer much for their

[1] *Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance.* It ran through twelve editions in England in 1796, was issued in New York and Philadelphia, and in Paris (translated by F. Lanthenas) in the same year.

wrongs, than break the chain that binds us together.[1] For there is no one article of my political creed more clearly demonstrated to my mind than this, that we shall proceed with gigantic strides to honor and consideration, and national greatness, if the union is preserved; but that if it is once broken, we shall soon divide into a parcel of petty tribes at perpetual war with one another, swayed by rival European powers, whose policy will agree perfectly in the system of keeping us at variance with one another, and who will at the same time govern and despise the party they may respectively protect.

. . . . . .

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, June 11, 1796.

SIR:

I have the pleasure to inform you, that the President with the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States, has appointed you their Minister Plenipotentiary to Portugal; Col. Humphreys having at the same time been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain.[2] But the negotiations with the Barbary Powers, which were committed to Colo. Humphreys, unfortunately continue incomplete: there is indeed not a little danger that the peace concluded with Algiers may, by some untoward events, be defeated. This circumstance, together with the fact that no minister is yet appointed to succeed you in Holland, where for several reasons, it seemed important we should have one, determined the President to postpone the transfer of your services from the Hague to Lisbon. You will therefore continue to exercise your

[1] Among the possible plans for his own future, he considered a settlement in one of the Southern States.

[2] David Humphreys was Minister Resident at Lisbon from February 21, 1791, to November 30, 1794. On May 20, 1796, he had been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain, and held that appointment until November, 1801.

functions as Minister Resident at the Hague, until a change of circumstances shall render it expedient for you to proceed to Lisbon. This expected change may probably admit of your removal early in the autumn, of which however you will be duly advised. In the mean time you will consider the new appointment, what it is in reality, a decided proof of the President's high opinion of your talents, integrity and worth.

I am very respectfully, etc.

TIMOTHY PICKERING.[1]

[1] The date of Adams' appointment was May 30, 1796. This letter reached him August 6, and he replied: "As a proof of the President's approbation of my conduct since I have been in the public service of the United States, and the good opinion he entertains of my intentions, it has deeply affected my sensibility." *To the Secretary of State*, August 7, 1796. The commission, letter of credence, and instructions were not sent until February 17, 1797.

Abigail Adams wrote, August 10, 1796, that this appointment "was the last nomination which the President made before the rising of Congress, and took place after your father came home [to Quincy], without its ever being hinted to him. The appointment was agreed to, as Mr. Otis informs me, unanimously by the Senate." Ms.

"The appointment to the mission of Portugal I find from your letter was as I had before concluded unknown to my father. I have already written you upon the subject, and I hope, my ever dear and honored mother, that you are fully convinced from my letters which you have before this received, that upon the contingency of my father's being placed in the first magistracy, *I* shall never give him any trouble by solicitation for office of any kind. Your late letters have repeated so many times that I shall in that case have nothing to *expect* that I am afraid you have imagined it possible that I might form expectations from such an event. I had hoped that *my mother* knew me better; that she did me the justice to believe that I have not been so totally regardless or forgetful of the principles which my education has instilled, nor so totally destitute of a *personal* sense of delicacy as to be susceptible of a wish tending in that direction. I have indeed long known that my father is far more ambitious for my advancement, far more solicitous for the extension of my fame, than I ever have been, or ever shall be myself; but I have hitherto had the satisfaction to observe that the notice with which my country and its government have honored me, and the confidences which they have been pleased repeatedly to repose in me, have been without the smallest agency of my father, other than the recommendation which his services carried with them." *To Abigail Adams*, November 14, 1796. Ms.

TO MADAME DE LA FAYETTE

La Haye, Juin 15, 1796.

Madame:

La lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire, me fut remise par Monsieur de Lally à Londres, dans un moment ou, Mr. Pinckney étant déjà de retour à sa résidence, je n'avais aucune relation quelconque avec le Ministre Britannique.

Il m'eut été certainement très précieux de pouvoir être de quelque utilité à vous et à M. de la Fayette. Les bontés personnelles et les services signalés qu'il a rendu à ma patrie, lui ont donné les plus grands droits à ma reconnaissance et à mon attachment. Ces sentiments, qui me sont communs avec tous les Américains, sont encore fortifiés par ceux de l'ancienne amitié pour lui dont tout ma famille s'honore. Ce fut donc avec le regret le plus sensible que je me trouvai, lorsque je reçus vôtre lettre, dans l'impossibilité de faire la démarche qu'elle m'indiquait. Je ne pus seulement que remplir le devoir de la recommander à Mr. Pinckney, qui partage avec sensibilité le désir ardent de tous les citoyens des États Unis, de toutes les âmes généreuses de voir rendre à la liberté celui qui a si glorieusement servi sa cause.

Quoiqu'en cette occasion je n'ai eu que les sentiments pénibles d'une volonté sincère à vous servir, sans en posseder les moyens, je vous prie d'être assurée, que si aux vœux que je ne cesse de faire pour sa libération et la vôtre, je pourrai jamais ajouter le pouvoir d'y contribuer, je regarderai le moment auquel je saisirai cet avantage comme un des plus heureux de ma vie.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec tous les sentiments de respect et d'admiration que vous commandez à tant de titres Madam, vôtre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, June 24, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

If the accounts received here are well founded, the House of Representatives have at last passed the laws necessary to execute on our part the treaty with Britain, though by a very small majority.[1] There will therefore now be left no pretext for refusing, or delaying any longer, the delivery of the forts, and I believe that it will be, or rather that it has been done. If there should be any further cavilling and quibbling on this subject, I think our government may conclude that all hope or expectation of amicable adjustment is vain, and hope they will pursue such a line of conduct as will either curb an insolence altogether insupportable, or bring to the test the importance of our national friendship.

The American citizens partial to the French interest that I meet occasionally, and the French political characters with whom I have an opportunity to converse, all foretell with a confidence which would alarm if its motive were not dis-

[1] The vote taken on April 30 was fifty-one ayes and forty-eight nays. "The treaty to be executed, and a majority of three members. It is I own rather better than I expected, and gives me great pleasure, because it will put John [Bull] upon his good behavior, and either keep us at bare peace with him, or if we must quarrel, will keep the *right* of the cause on our side. I trust he will now give us the forts, spite of wishes and vaticinations of you know who [J. Q. A.]. If he does not, I shall be ready to give him up, and fight him at once." *To Joseph Hall*, June 17, 1796. Ms.

"I was happy to find that after all there was a majority in that house (a feeble one indeed), who could make a distinction between the *right* to *ratify* or *reject*, and the *power* to *violate* a solemn national engagement, and who did not think proper to construe the latter, which they certainly possessed, into the former, which the Constitution has explicitly placed in other hands. I own I did not expect to find the name of Mr. Madison among the negatives of that vote." *To Abigail Adams*, July 26, 1796. Ms.

cernible, and which even as it is deserves attention, that the forts will not be delivered up according to the treaty, and some of them undertake particularly to specify the fort of Niagara, which they say will certainly be withheld. This confident foresight, however, is one of the party manœuvres. They hoped that the House of Representatives would make such a stand against the treaty as at least to leave its efficacy in suspense until after the period designated for the surrender of the posts. They had no doubt but that in that case the British government would at least delay the delivery while a question on our side remained, and they were desirous to secure the benefit of a future pretension that the delay on the part of the British proceeded, not from the obstacles raised by us, but from a deliberate and perfidious intention to make a sport of the most solemn obligations. This policy has so long been evident to me, that I thought the party in our national representative body would endeavor only to *delay* the resolve for passing the necessary laws, and would not venture out point-blank against their enactment at all.

As to the good faith of the British government I have just the same opinion of it that I have of their friendly disposition towards the United States, or of their commercial generosity. They are all upon a level, and Heaven forefend that our only dependence for their performance of stipulations should ever rest upon either. But I cannot see what pretext they can now raise to furnish a further delay, and although the influential party among them would rejoice at an opportunity to go to war with us, they dare not do it without some plausible reason to stimulate the animosity of their own people.

I feel therefore almost as confident that the posts will be delivered up, as my French friends are, or appear to be, that they will not. I have been obscurely sounded both directly

and indirectly by the French Minister here, to discover my opinion upon the article since my return from England, but have not thought it consistent with my duty to gratify his curiosity.

But if they should not, upon whatever pretence the denial may be grounded it will certainly become an important object with our government to take measures of preparation for a state of hostility, which will in that case, I think, be unavoidable, and which will scarce be worth attempting any longer to avoid.

Our only vulnerable part will be our commerce; but that will for a certain period of time be very much exposed, and, while the contest continues, must expect to be totally suspended in our own vessels at least. This last part of the evil will admit of no preventive remedy; it *must* follow from the incontestable superior naval power of Britain, and is proved sufficiently by the present experience of this Republic, as well as France, neither of which have, I think, an ounce of merchandise afloat under their own flags for any trade but that of coasting, which is likewise very insecure.

Whether the government will have the means of providing a shelter for any part of the navigation that will be in danger of immediate capture, I am not able to conjecture. But there are some observations which occur so frequently to my mind, that I cannot avoid mentioning them. If they can be of no service, at least they will do no harm.

It has been, you know, the policy of Great Britain for more than a hundred years past, whenever she was determined to go to war with any other nation, to begin hostilities without giving any previous notice, to continue her depredations as long as the patience of her adverse party would bear a continuance of pacific negotiation, and to amuse with one expedient and another, until the defenceless navi-

gation of the complaining power has been ruined, at least as much as depended upon her. You know, likewise, that France has by dear experience been so clearly convinced that this is the permanent British system, that in the last war and the present she has taken special care to be before hand in the attack. From the general disposition of the British government and nation towards the United States, and more especially from their conduct towards us during the present war, we may be assured that she will invariably follow the same principles in her differences with us. The orders of Council of the 6th of November, 1793, are alone a sufficient proof of their dispositions, and indeed, when the nature of the British power is considered, the conclusion is inevitable that the course can not possibly be otherwise.

Let us take it, therefore, for granted that such will be the maxims of the cabinet, and let us suppose that the intention to make an application of them to America should exist. It is apparent that the more the American commerce is extended, the more it will inevitably suffer from this species of preliminary plunder. These facts being so clear make the very magnitude of the commerce into which our neutrality has led our countrymen a subject of alarm. It appears evident to me that at this moment our people are overtrading, that a larger portion of the capital of the country is employed in commerce and navigation than it can support, and that we shall suffer for it, either during the war by getting involved in it, or at the peace by the exclusions which will naturally follow from the regulations of the powers now belligerent.

I am apprehensive that this overtrading will continue, and have a tendency to increase still further, the longer the war shall last without our participating in it. Should this be the case we shall be continually more exposed to injury

the further we advance, and continually offer to the rapacity of the British navy a fairer object of plunder.

We have no naval power of our own, and from the general temper of our people I suspect that they will never submit to the expense, without which it can neither be created nor maintained, until a bitter experience shall teach them that in the present state of the world, and with such a nation as Britain existing, the expense of a respectable naval power is the price which must be paid for a secure commerce by every other.

I know not whether our government is in possession of *any* means that can restrain the boundless avidity of our commercial speculators, who seem in many instances to think that a power which cannot exact obedience is, however, competent to give protection. They will, therefore, venture upon the wildest commercial schemes, and when they have brought them into trouble, curse the government for not helping them out. It is a fact, which the popular passions would refuse to hear, but which I firmly believe, that the stipulations in the British treaty which have abandoned for the present the power of protecting enemies' property in neutral vessels, will have an operation very favorable to the United States by checking that excessive extraordinary trade, which must be stopped entirely upon the return of peace. The present state of our commerce may be compared to a boiling fluid which, unless properly guarded, swells and overflows; but upon subsiding leaves the vessel emptied in part of its contents.

I sometimes think that you will judge from the complexion of my letters, that my imagination is apt to raise phantoms and then tremble before them; that my opinions have too strong a tincture of timidity for the boldness necessary to a political character. And I freely confess that the neu-

trality of the United States throughout the present war, until its final termination, is in my mind an object of such inestimable value, and involves so deeply the welfare not of the present age only but of all posterity, that I may perhaps be inclined to see through a magnifying medium everything that can have a tendency to defeat it. It is certain that France, and this country too, are ardently desirous to engage in the war. The principal inducements which have heretofore contributed to make France acquiesce in our neutrality have recently been removed. They were the debt which we owed them, and their dependence upon us for provisions. Their present plenty and the prospect of an abundant harvest make them confident of producing sufficient for their own subsistence, and that part of the debt that remained undischarged has been sold to a private company. On the other hand France has a fair hope of making an advantageous and honorable peace with Austria, her only remaining formidable continental enemy, and she expects to be soon left to contend with Britain alone, whose relative situation is so advantageous that there is no prospect of her consenting to a peace, such as the French government think themselves obliged to require. For it is to be remarked that the situation of Britain relative to France is similar to that of France relative to the continental powers. The Dutch Colonies both of East and West Indies are falling one after another into the hands of the British. And unless France can procure some other resource besides her maritime exertions her own possessions will meet the same fate. That resource I have more than once mentioned to you in my former letters. It is to distress the British commerce by uniting all the maritime powers in war against her; or rather by provoking them all to quarrel with her. This system was pursued with Sweden and was on the point of succeeding, when the Em-

press of Russia interfered in her usual style by prescribing the most humiliating conditions, to which after some blustering Sweden was compelled to submit. The ambassador, your old acquaintance, de Staël, is therefore removed from Paris, and the French policy may be considered as entirely defeated at present in Sweden. The same terror of Russia controls the Danish cabinet, which appears inflexibly determined upon the preservation of neutrality, though they are no less indignant than ourselves at the depredations and insolence of the British. It was but the other day that they cut out a Dutch or French vessel from the port of Bergen. The French government complained in an high tone, but the final answer they received was that they had been, and should be protected as far as the Danish government was able, but if they expected their vessels to be safe, they must direct them to anchor only in the ports that are well fortified and of strength beyond an insult. Hamburg has also resisted the French operations, which would have involved their city with the Emperor. But as France had a vast number of their vessels in her ports, she has dealt not so ceremoniously with them, but embargoed them all, and now insists upon a large sum as a price of accommodation. In Spain the French views have a better prospect of success. The differences between that government and the British increase, and the harmony of the former with the French Republic is likewise augmenting. The success of the Italian campaign has laid the princes of that country at the feet of the Directory, who prescribe to them all their own terms of peace. It is said, and with the greatest appearance of probability, that they will require of the King of Sardinia,[1] the Duke of Modena,[2] the Pope,[3] and the King of Naples,[4]

[1] Victor Amadeus III. [2] Hercules III. [3] Pius VI.
[4] Ferdinand IV, who married Maria Carolina, daughter of Maria Theresa.

as indispensable terms, such stipulations as will exclude the British from all their dominions. Tuscany is indeed a neutral power, but will be so much at the mercy of the French, that the government will no doubt be very much under their influence. As to *their* respect for neutral rights, they may be inferred from what the Commander-in-chief Buonaparte writes recently to the Directory. He has taken possession of Verona in the Venetian territory, and of course a neutral city. But it seems the French pretender not long since had resided there, and Buonaparte says, that if he had not been gone before his arrival, he would have set fire to the city for having the insolence to think itself the capital of the French Empire.

It is not improbable, therefore, that they will be able to shut the whole Italian market against the British navigation, and if so it will become very difficult for the British to retain Corsica, or to maintain their commerce in the Black Sea. The French therefore have a fair prospect of excluding their enemy from the benefit of trade with all Europe, excepting only the Baltic, and it is the power of Russia which alone will hinder them from obtaining the same advantage there. If in addition to this they can equally deprive her of all the immense advantages of the American market, they think, and with great appearance of reason, that the British commerce must decline, so as to occasion a deficiency of revenue, a loss of credit, perhaps a deficiency of natural payments, and such a general distress and clamor for peace, as will bring the haughtiness of Britain down to the modesty even of a pacification at the expense of many sacrifices; or perhaps they flatter themselves with the still more pleasing hope of seeing their inveterate and deadly rival a completely ruined nation.

It is not to be doubted, therefore, but that France will

use all the influence in her power to produce a war between the United States and Britain. What her influence is at all times, and what her talents at exerting it, are perfectly well known to you. But there is one cause operating at present which gives unusual weight to her influence, and of which few people among us I believe are aware. The public opinion in America concerning European affairs is in a considerable degree formed from the representations of the Americans arriving occasionally from Europe, or writing from some part of it to their friends. But it so happens that nine-tenths of the Americans both in France and England, have powerful motives both of feeling and of interest to bias their judgments, to make them favorable to the French cause and adverse to the British. The motives of feeling arise not only from the popularity which the ideas of a struggle for liberty have given to the French, but from the difference of treatment that our countrymen experience in the two countries. In the general treatment of strangers the French manners are captivating, the English are repulsive. In the particular sentiments towards Americans which give the tone to the behavior of individuals, those of France are amicable and attractive, those of England always cold and distant, generally insolent and overbearing, and not unfrequently contemptuous and malignant. It is impossible for any American having the common feelings of a man, to be conversant with the two nations, without contracting an instinctive propensity of good will towards the former, and of malevolence or at least of resentment towards the latter. The motives of interest have the same tendency. Great numbers of the Americans in France have debts due to them from the French government. Almost all have speculated, either in the purchase of confiscated estates, or of assignats or in some other manner upon revolutionary

ground. It is not necessary to reason at any great length, in order to show that the *private interest* of all such persons is concerned in the success of France through the war, and in her attainment of an advantageous peace. On the other hand the Americans in England are almost universally indebted more or less to the British merchants, and they generally believe that a war between the United States and Britain would serve as a sponge for their debts, or at least relieve them from payment as long as it should last, and leave them in the meantime possessed of the capital upon which the debts arose. There are some Americans, and they are among the number of those whose abilities give their statements and representations the greatest weight, who have all those motives operating upon them at once, who are at the same time debtors to British merchants, creditors to the French government, and speculators in all the French revolutionary funds, all to an immense amount. These persons as creditors of the French government, if not in any other capacity, have access to many members of the legislative and executive bodies. With all their incentives of feeling and of interest they are not only stimulated to wish well to France, but may be sensible that they cannot ingratiate themselves better than by contributing to the furtherance of the French views; and the conclusion of the whole matter is, that the whole weight and influence of such people in America are far from being friendly to the peace of the United States. It is easy to conceive how much energy this kind of combination may have acquired, by a regular intercourse and concerted operations with the principal partizans for war in the United States, as the force of such concert would be but the more efficacious for being secret.

There is nothing, therefore, but a peace between France and Britain that can extricate us from the danger of being

sooner or later involved in the quarrel. But at the same time, it is evident that the state of affairs at present makes it more than ever the interest of the British government to avoid a rupture with us. The longer the war continues, the more that interest will increase, from the double cause of their constant weakening and our continually growing strength. These circumstances will not be overlooked I trust by the American government, nor by whatever negotiation shall finish the business relative to the late treaty. That subject will be of extreme delicacy; for on the one hand it will offer abundant occasions to try seriously the degree of pliability of which the British cabinet is capable, and on the other there will be some danger of straining that string too far. By the full effect that is now given to the treaty on our part, the advantage of justice appears to be altogether on our side, and if we must eventually try the temper of our swords, that circumstance will at least afford a great consolation.

From some of the facts upon which these observations are founded there may be drawn an inference, that in all times of maritime war the closest possible attention is to be paid by the American minister in England to the proceedings of the Privy Council. It is upon orders proceeding from them that all the captures by the king's ships and privateers are founded, and when the object of the government is to negotiate and plunder at the same time, as long as the patience of those whom they injure may last, these orders are kept as secret as possible. It should, therefore, I think be a standing instruction to our minister at that Court whenever they are at war, to use all the endeavors in his power to obtain information of the secret orders of Council to the commanders of armed vessels. I know not how far it could at any time be effected, but I am fully persuaded that the

day will come when such information, if procured at the time when the orders are resolved on, will prove of the utmost utility to the protection of our commercial property.

I remain &c.[1]

[1] "It is undoubtedly true that the violence and rapacity of a superior naval strength drove this Republic very reluctantly to a war towards the close of our contest with Britain. It is equally true that this Republic alone of all the combatants at that time against Great Britain was compelled after suffering immense losses to acquiesce in a peace without indemnity, without satisfaction, and at the expense of great commercial and some territorial sacrifices.

"The present war on the part of Great Britain was at one time justified by some members of the government as undertaken in *defence* of the commercial rights of the United Provinces. The progress of this *defence* has been to bring the Allies into a war against each other, and, whether defending or assaulting, the sole purpose that is invariably and inflexibly pursued is that of annihilating the Dutch commercial and maritime power.

"This system of policy is not applied to the Dutch alone, but to every nation that has a vessel floating upon the ocean. It is pursued with so much perseverance and ability as well as with such extraordinary exertions of strength, that it becomes a consideration of no inconsiderable magnitude to the government of every commercial people to counteract a project so pernicious to their welfare.

"The object is undoubtedly of the utmost importance to the United States, because they, from their situation, their prospects and their character, may depend upon having the whole weight of the policy directed against them; and because according to the present state of things, they alone of all the nations upon earth may rationally hope to possess the means of restoring the British views to a greater conformity with the equitable principles of natural right.

"As far as the experience of this country can serve as a guide, it does not appear that the proper mode of resistance against the exclusive ambition of Britain is by making war without an adequate naval force to meet them upon the sea." *To the Secretary of State*, June 16, 1796. Ms.

"I hope it will not be thought impertinent if I take this occasion to observe that since the United States have acquired the consideration in Europe that the prosperous administration of the national government has given them, the European cabinets have naturally increased their attention to its proceedings. In England I think it may be taken as a general fact, that the Ministry are informed of the proceedings of Congress and of the American news, about three weeks earlier than the American Minister. Even in this country their intelligence is often more recent than mine." *To the Secretary of State*, June 22, 1796. Ms.

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